Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ

OR,

A PLAIN AND PROFITABLE DISCOURSE ON JOHN 6:37 SHOWING THE CAUSE, TRUTH, AND MANNER OF THE COMING OF A SINNER TO JESUS CHRIST; WITH HIS HAPPY RECEPTION AND BLESSED ENTERTAINMENT.

WRITTEN BY JOHN BUNYAN, AUTHOR OF "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS." London, 1681.
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"And they shall come which were ready to perish." —Isaiah 27:13.

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

"Come and welcome to Jesus Christ," is a subject peculiarly fitted to the deep and searching experience of John Bunyan. He knew all the wiles of sin and Satan, in placing stumblingblocks in the way of a sincere penitent; all the human craft employed in keeping the soul from a simple and entire reliance upon Christ for salvation. This little work soon became most deservedly popular, passing through four large editions during the last seven years of the author's life. It is an enlightened display of the dealings of the Father in giving sinners to Christ; the Son in saving them by his atonement, mediation, and intercession; and the Holy Spirit in sanctifying and fitting them for glory. Here is no Calvinism, Lutheranism, or Arminianism; no Episcopacy, Presbytery, or Independency; nothing but Christism and Bibleism. The gracious invitation is addressed to all who feel their misery, Come unto me, and I will make you happy and blessed. All who feel the leprosy of sin are invited to this spiritual Physician, and he only can and will heal them. All who suffer under the slavery of sin and Satan,

Christ alone can make you free. Come to him, and you shall be free indeed. The analysis of Bunyan's treatise shows that ALL mankind are born in sin. ALL sinners are invited to Christ. None will come but such as feel the plague, and see the leprosy of sin. Those who come are drawn in a variety of ways —some terrified with the horrors of hell, others allured by the gracious voice of the Saviour, and the prospects of heavenly felicity. ALL who sincerely come, attain the same end, a sincere and total reliance upon the Saviour as the only refuge from the roaring lion.

Every other way to life is guarded by the flaming swords of the cherubim. Christ opens his golden arms wider than all our miseries. But he suffers no rival on his throne, no partnership with Moses or John Baptist. The personification of "shall come," and of "ignorance," is strikingly illustrative; as is "sin, the winding-sheet of the soul;" "unbelief, the white devil;" the sinner being a counsellor for Satan; and the two ways of taking our own likeness. His appeal to persecutors is most forcible. But I must not detain the reader longer from the pleasure and profit he will receive from an attentive perusal of these pages.

HACKNEY, 1850. GEORGE OFFOR.

Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." — John 6:37.

A little before, in this chapter, you may read that the Lord Jesus walked on the sea to go to Capernaum, having sent his disciples before in a ship, but the wind was contrary; by which means the ship was hindered in her passage. Now, about the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came walking upon the sea, and overtook them; at the sight of whom they were afraid.

Note, When providences are black and terrible to God's people, the Lord Jesus shows himself to them in wonderful manner; the which sometimes they can as little bear, as they can the things that were before terrible to them. They were afraid of the wind and the

water; they were also afraid of their Lord and Saviour, when he appeared to them in that state.

But he said, "Be not afraid, it is I."

Note, That the end of the appearing of the Lord Jesus unto his people, though the manner of his appearing be never so terrible, is to allay their fears and perplexities.

Then they received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at land whither it went.

Note, When Christ is absent from his people, they go on but slowly, and with great difficulty; but when he joineth himself unto them, oh! how fast they steer their course! how soon are they at their journey's end![1]

The people now among whom he last preached, when they saw that both Jesus was gone and his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him, they wonderingly asked him, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" but the Lord Jesus, slighting their compliment, answered, "Verily, verily, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but

[1] "My grace is sufficient for thee," and the language of the church, conscious of its own weakness and the Lord's all-sufficiency, is, "Draw me, we will run after thee" (Song 1:4). —*Mason*.

because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

Note, A people may follow Christ far for base ends, as these went after him beyond sea for loaves. A man's belly will carry him a great way in religion; yea, a man's belly will make him venture far for Christ.

Note again, They are not feigning compliments, but gracious intentions, that crown the work in the eye of Christ; or thus, it is not the toil and business of professors,[2] but their love to him, that makes him approve of them.

Note again, When men shall look for friendly entertainment at Christ's hand, if their hearts be rotten, even then will they meet with a check and rebuke. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

Yet observe again, He doth not refuse to give, even to these, good counsel: he bids them labour for the meat that endureth to eternal life. Oh! how willingly would Jesus Christ have even those professors that come to him with pretences only, come to him sincerely, that they may be saved.

The text, you will find, is, after much more

[2] No outward profession is accepted, except it springs from inward love to Christ. —Ed.

discourse with and about this people, and it is uttered by the Lord Jesus as the conclusion of the whole, and intimateth that, since they were professors in pretence only, and therefore such as his soul could not delight in, as such, that he would content himself with a remnant that his Father had bestowed upon him. As who should say, I am not like to be honoured in your salvation; but the Father hath bestowed upon me a people, and they shall come to me in truth, and in them will I be satisfied. The text, therefore, may be called *Christ's repose*; in the fulfilling whereof he resteth himself content, after much labour and many sermons spent, as it were, in vain. As he saith by the prophet, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain" (Isa 49:4).

But as there he saith, "My judgment *is* with the LORD, and my work with my God;" so in the text he saith, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." By these words, therefore, the Lord Jesus comforteth himself under the consideration of the dissimulation of some of his followers. He also thus betook himself to rest under the consideration of the little effect that his ministry had in Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida: "I thank thee, O Father," said he, "Lord of heaven and earth,

because thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt 11:25; Luke 10:21).

The text, in the general, standeth of TWO PARTS, and hath special respect to the Father and the Son; as also to their joint management of the salvation of the people: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." *The first part of the text*, as is evident, respecteth the Father and his gift; *the other part* the Son and his reception of that gift.

FIRST, For the gift of the Father there is this to be considered, to wit, the gift itself; and that is the gift of certain persons to the Son. The Father giveth, and that gift shall come: "And him that cometh." The gift, then, is of persons; the Father giveth persons to Jesus Christ.

SECOND, Next you have the Son's reception of this gift, and that showeth itself in these particulars: —1. In his hearty acknowledgement of it to be *a gift*: "The Father giveth me." 2. In his taking notice, after a solemn manner, of *all* and every part of the *gift*: "All that the Father giveth me." 3. In his resolution to bring them to himself: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." 4. And

in his determining that not anything shall make him dislike them in their coming: "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

These things might be spoken to at large, as they are in this method presented to view: but I shall choose to speak to the words, FIRST, BY WAY OF EXPLICATION. SECOND, BY WAY OF OBSERVATION.

[FIRST, THE TEXT TREATED BY WAY OF EXPLICATION.]

[THE EXTENT OF THE GIFT.]

"All that the Father giveth me." This word *all*, is often used in Scripture, and is to be taken more largely, or more strictly, even as the truth or argument, for the sake of which it is made use of, will bear. Wherefore, that we may the better understand the mind of Christ in the use of it here, we must consider, that it is limited and restrained only to those that shall be saved, to wit, to those that shall come to Christ; even to those whom he will "in no wise cast out." Thus, also, the words *all Israel*, is sometimes to be taken, although sometimes it is taken for the whole family of Jacob. "And

so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom 11:26). By all Israel here, he intendeth not all of Israel, in the largest sense; "for they are not all Israel which are of Israel;" "neither because they are of the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom 9:6-8).

This word ALL, therefore, must be limited and enlarged, as the truth and argument, for the sake of which it is used, will bear; else we shall abuse Scripture, and readers, and ourselves, and all. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," said Christ, "will draw ALL *men* unto me" (John 12:32). Can any man imagine, that by ALL, in this place, he should mean all and every individual man in the world, and not rather that all that is consonant to the scope of the place? And if, by being "lifted up from the earth," he means, as he should seem, his being taken up into heaven; and if, by "drawing ALL men after him," he meant a drawing them unto that place of glory; then must he mean by ALL men, those, and only those, that shall in truth be eternally saved from the wrath to come. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom 11:32). Here again you have all and all,

two alls; but yet a greater disparity between the all made mention of in the first place, and that all made mention of the second. Those intended in this text are the Jews, even all of them, by the first all that you find in the words. The second all doth also intend the same people; but yet only so many of them as God will have mercy upon. "He hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." The all also in the text, is likewise to be limited and restrained to the saved, and to them only. But again; —

The word "giveth," or "hath given," must be restrained, after the same manner, to the same limited number. "All that the Father giveth me." Not all that are given, if you take the gift of the Father to the Son in the largest sense; for in that sense there are many given to him that shall never come unto him; yea, many are given unto him that he will "cast out." I shall, therefore, first show you the truth of this; and then in what sense the gift in the text must be taken.

First, [ALL *cannot be intended in its largest sense*.] That ALL that are given to Christ, if you take the gift of the Father to him in the largest sense, cannot be intended in the text, is evident —

1. Because, then, all the men, yea, all the

things in the world, must be saved. “All things,” saith he, “are delivered unto me of my Father” (Matt 11:27). This, I think, no rational man in the world will conclude. Therefore, the gift intended in the text must be restrained to some, to a gift that is given by way of speciality by the Father to the Son.

2. It must not be taken for ALL, that in any sense are given by the Father to him, because the Father hath given some, yea, many to him, to be dashed in pieces by him. “Ask of me,” said the Father to him, “and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.” But what must be done with them? must he save them all? No. “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psa 2). This method he useth not with them that he saveth by his grace, but with those that himself and saints shall rule over in justice and severity (Rev 2:26,27). Yet, as you see, “they are given to him.” Therefore, the gift intended in the text must be restrained to some, to a gift that is given by way of speciality by the Father to the Son.

In Psalm 18 he saith plainly, that some are given to him that he might destroy them. “Thou hast given me the necks of mine

enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me" (verse 40). These, therefore, cannot be of the number of those that are said to be given in the text; for those, even ALL of them, shall come to him, "and he will in no wise cast them out."

3. Some are given to Christ, that he by them might bring about some of his high and deep designs in the world. Thus Judas was given to Christ, to wit, that by him, even as was determined before, he might bring about his death, and so the salvation of his elect by his blood. Yea, and Judas must so manage this business, as that he must lose himself for ever in bringing it to pass. Therefore the Lord Jesus, even in his losing of Judas, applies himself to the judgment of his Father, if he had not in that thing done that which was right, even in suffering of Judas so to bring about his Master's death, as that he might, by so doing, bring about his own eternal damnation also.

"Those," said he, "that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12). Let us, then, grant that Judas was given to Christ, but not as others are given to him, not as those made mention of in the text; for then he should have failed to have been so received by Christ, and kept to eternal

life. Indeed, he was given to Christ; but he was given to him to lose him, in the way that I have mentioned before; he was given to Christ, that he by him might bring about his own death, as was before determined; and that in the overthrow of him that did it. Yea, he must bring about his own death, as was before determined, and that in the overthrow of him that did it. Yea, he must bring about his dying for us in the loss of the instrument that betrayed him, that he might even fulfil the Scripture in his destruction, as well as in the salvation of the rest. "And none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

[*Second, Those intended as the gift*.] —The gift, therefore, in the text, must not be taken in the largest sense, but even as the words will bear, to wit, for such a gift as he accepteth, and promiseth to be an effectual means of eternal salvation to. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Mark! they shall come that are in special given to me; and they shall by no means be rejected. For this is the substance of the text.

Those, therefore, intended as the gift in the text, are those that are given by covenant to the Son; those that in other places are called

"the elect," "the chosen," "the sheep," and "the children of the promise," &c. These be they that the Father hath given to Christ to keep them; those that Christ hath promised eternal life unto; those to whom he hath given his word, and that he will have with him in his kingdom to behold his glory.

"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39). "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28). "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word; I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*." "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" (John 17:1,6,9,10,24).

All these sentences are of the same import with the text; and the alls and manies, those, they, &c., in these several sayings of Christ, are the same with all the given in the text. "All that the Father giveth."

So that, as I said before, the word ALL, as also other words, must not be taken in such sort as our foolish fancies or groundless opinions will prompt us to, but do admit of an enlargement or a restriction, according to the true meaning and intent of the text. We must therefore diligently consult the meaning of the text, by comparing it with other the sayings of God; so shall we be better able to find out the mind of the Lord, in the word which he has given us to know it by.

[THE PERSON GIVING, THE FATHER.]

"All that the Father giveth." By this word "Father," Christ describeth the person giving; by which we may learn several useful things.

First, That the Lord God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is concerned with the Son in the salvation of his people. True, his acts, as to our salvation, are diverse from those of the Son; he was not capable of doing that, or those things for us, as did the Son; he died not, he

spilt not blood for our redemption, as the Son; but yet he hath a hand, a great hand, in our salvation too. As Christ saith, "The Father himself loveth you," and his love is manifest in choosing of us, in giving of us to his Son; yea, and in giving his Son also to be a ransom for us. Hence he is called, "The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." For here even the Father hath himself found out, and made way for his grace to come to us through the sides and the heart-blood of his well-beloved Son (Col 1:12-14). The Father, therefore, is to be remembered and adored, as one having a chief hand in the salvation of sinners. We ought to give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12). For "the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world" (John 4:14). As also we see in the text, the "Father giveth" the sinner to Christ to save him.

Second, Christ Jesus the Lord, by this word "Father," would familiarize this giver to us. Naturally the name of God is dreadful to us, especially when he is discovered to us by those names that declare his justice, holiness, power, and glory; but now this word "Father" is a familiar word, it frighteth not the sinner, but rather inclineth his heart to love, and be

pleased with the remembrance of him. Hence Christ also, when he would have us to pray with godly boldness, puts this word "Father" into our mouths; saying, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven;" concluding thereby, that by the familiarity that by such a word is intimated, the children of God may take more boldness to pray for, and ask great things. I myself have often found, that when I can say but this word Father, it doth me more good than when I call him by any other Scripture name. It is worth your noting, that to call God by his relative title was rare among the saints in Old Testament times. Seldom do you find him called by this name; no, sometimes not in three or four books: but now in New Testament times, he is called by no name so often as this, both by the Lord Jesus himself, and by the apostles afterwards. Indeed, the Lord Jesus was he that first made this name common among the saints, and that taught them, both in their discourses, their prayers, and in their writings, so much to use it; it being more pleasing to, and discovering more plainly our interest in, God, than any other expression; for by this one name we are made to understand that all our mercies are the offspring of God, and that we also that are called are his children by adoption.

[*Import of the word* GIVETH.] —"All that the Father giveth."

This word "giveth" is out of Christ's ordinary dialect, and seemeth to intimate, at the first sound, as if the Father's gift to the Son was not an act that is past, but one that is present and continuing; when, indeed, this gift was bestowed upon Christ when the covenant, the eternal covenant, was made between them before all worlds. Wherefore, in those other places, when this gift is mentioned, it is still spoken of, as of an act that is past; as, "All that he hath give me; to as many as thou hast given me; thou gavest them me; and those which thou hast given me." Therefore, of necessity, this must be the first and chief sense of the text; I mean of this word "giveth," otherwise the doctrine of election, and of the eternal covenant which was made between the Father and the Son, in which covenant this gift of the Father is most certainly comprised, will be shaken, or at leastwise questionable, by erroneous and wicked men: for they may say, That the Father gave not all those to Christ that shall be saved, before the world was made; for that this act of giving is an act of continuation.[3] But again, this word "giveth" is

[3] How clearly is every seeming difficulty explained by Bunyan. The Father entered into covenant with the

not to be rejected, for it hath its proper use, and may signify to us —

1. That though the act of giving among men doth admit of the time past, or the time to come, and is to be spoken of with reference to such time; yet with God it is not so. Things past, or things to come, are always present with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ: He "calleth those things which be not," that is, to us, "as though they were" (Rom 4:17). And again, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." All things to God are present, and so the gift of the Father to the Son, although to us, as is manifest by the word, it is an act that is past (Acts 15:16).

2. Christ may express himself thus, to show, that the Father hath not only given him this portion in the lump, before the world was, but that those that he had so given, he will give him again; that is, will bring them to him at the time of their conversion; for the Father bringeth them to Christ (John 6:44). As it is said, "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work;" that is, in the righteousness of Christ; for it is God that

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Son, in eternity, to save his elect; and, in time, as they appear upon earth, the Father *giveth* them to Christ by effectual calling, and he brings them to eternal glory. —Ed.

imputeth that to those that are saved (Psa 45:14; 1 Cor 1). A man giveth his daughter to such a man, first in order to marriage, and this respects the time past, and he giveth her again at the day appointed in marriage. And in this last sense, perhaps, the text may have a meaning; that is, that all that the Father hath, before the world was, given to Jesus Christ, he giveth them again to him in the day of their espousals.

Things that are given among men, are ofttimes best at first; to wit, when they are new; and the reason is, because all earthly things wax old; but with Christ it is not so. This gift of the Father is not old and deformed, and unpleasant in his eyes; and therefore to him it is always new. When the Lord spake of giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites, he saith not, that he had given, or would give it to them, but thus: "The Lord thy God giveth thee - this good land" (Deut 9:6). Not but that he had given it to them, while they were in the loins of their fathers, hundreds of years before. Yet he saith now he giveth it to them; as if they were now also in the very act of taking possession, when as yet they were on the other side Jordan. What then should be the meaning? Why, I take it to be this. That the land should be to them always as new; as new as if they were taking

possession thereof but now. And so is the gift of the Father, mentioned in the text, to the Son; it is always new, as if it were always new.

"All that the Father giveth me." In these words you find mention made of two persons, the Father and the Son; the Father giving, and the Son receiving or accepting of this gift. This, then, in the first place, clearly demonstrateth, that the Father and the Son, though they, with the Holy Ghost, are one and the same eternal God; yet, as to their personality, are distinct. The Father is one, the Son is one, the Holy Spirit is one. But because there is in this text mention made but of two of the three, therefore a word about these two. The giver and receiver cannot be the same person in a proper sense, in the same act of giving and receiving. He that giveth, giveth not to himself, but to another; the Father giveth not to the Father, to wit, to himself, but to the Son: the Son receiveth not of the Son, to wit, of himself, but of the Father: so when the Father giveth commandment, he giveth it not to himself, but to another; as Christ saith, "He gave me a commandment" (John 12:49). So again, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me" (John 8:18).

Further, here is something implied that is

not expressed, to wit, that the Father hath not given all men to Christ; that is, in that sense as it is intended in this text, though in a larger, as was said before, he hath given him every one of them; for then all should be saved: he hath, therefore, disposed of some another way. He gives some up to idolatry; he gives some up to uncleanness, to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind. Now these he disposeth of in his anger, for their destruction, that they may reap the fruit of their doings, and be filled with the reward of their own ways (Acts 7:42; Rom 1:24,26,28). But neither hath he thus disposed of all men; he hath even of mercy reserved some from these judgments, and those are they that he will pardon, as he saith, "For I will pardon them whom I reserve" (Jer 50:20). Now these he hath given to Jesus Christ, by will, as a legacy and portion. Hence the Lord Jesus says, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39).

[THE FATHER'S INTENT IN GIVING.]

The Father, therefore, in giving of them to him to save them, must needs declare unto us these following things: —

First, That he is able to answer this design

of God, to wit, to save them to the uttermost sin, the uttermost temptation, &c. (Heb 7:25). Hence he is said to lay "help upon *one that is* mighty," "mighty to save" (Psa 89:19; Isa 63:1) and hence it is again, that God did even of old promise to send his people "a Saviour, a great one" (Isa 19:20). To save is a great work, and calls for almightiness in the undertaker: hence he is called the "Mighty God, the wonderful Counsellor," &c. Sin is strong, Satan is also strong, death and the grave are strong, and so is the curse of the law; therefore it follows, that this Jesus must needs be, by God the Father, accounted almighty, in that he hath given his elect to him to save them, and deliver them from these, and that in despite of all their force and power.

And he gave us testimony of this his might, when he was employed in that part of our deliverance that called for a declaration of it. He abolished death; he destroyed him that had the power of death; he was the destruction of the grave; he hath finished sin, and made an end of it, as to its damning effects upon the persons that the Father hath given him; he hath vanquished the curse of the law, nailed it to his cross, triumphed over them upon his cross, and made a show of these things openly (2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14,15; Hosea 13:14; Dan

9:24; Gal 3:13; Col 2:14,15). Yea, and even now, as a sign of his triumph and conquest, he is alive from the dead, and hath the keys of hell and death in his own keeping (Rev 1:18).

Second, The Father's giving of them to him to save them, declares unto us that he is and will be faithful in his office of Mediator, and that therefore they shall be secured from the fruit and wages of their sins, which is eternal damnation, by his faithful execution of it. And, indeed, it is said, even by the Holy Ghost himself, That he "was faithful to him that appointed him," that is, to this work of saving those that the Father hath given him for that purpose; as "Moses *was faithful* in all his house." Yea, and more faithful too, for Moses was faithful in God's house but as a servant; "but Christ as a Son over his own house" (Heb 3). And therefore this man is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, even upon this account, because more faithful than he, as well as because of the dignity of his person. Therefore in him, and in his truth and faithfulness, God resteth well pleased, and hath put all the government of this people upon his shoulders. Knowing that nothing shall be wanting in him, that may any way perfect this design. And of this he, to wit, the Son, hath already given a proof. For when the time was

come, that his blood was, by Divine justice, required for their redemption, washing, and cleansing, he as freely poured it out of his heart, as if it had been water out of a vessel; not sticking to part with his own life, that the life which was laid up for his people in heaven might not fail to be bestowed upon them. And upon this account, as well as upon any other, it is that God calleth him "my righteous servant" (Isa 53:11). For his righteousness could never have been complete, if he had not been to the uttermost faithful to the work he undertook; it is also, because he is faithful and true, that in righteousness he doth judge and make work for his people's deliverance. He will faithfully perform this trust reposed in him. The Father knows this, and hath therefore given his elect unto him.

Third, The Father's giving of them to him, to save them, declares that he is, and will be gentle, and patient towards them, under all their provocations and miscarriages. It is not to be imagined, the trials and provocations that the Son of God hath all along had with these people that have been given to him that saves them: indeed he is said to be "a tried stone;" for he has been tried, not only by the devil, guilt of sin, death, and the curse of the law, but also by his people's ignorance, unruliness, falls into

sin, and declining to errors in life and doctrine. Were we but capable of seeing how this Lord Jesus has been tried even by his people, ever since there was one of them in the world, we should be amazed at his patience and gentle carriages to them. It is said, indeed, "The Lord is very pitiful, slow to anger, and of great mercy." And, indeed, if he had not been so, he could never have endured their manners as he has done from Adam hitherto. Therefore is his pity and bowels towards his church preferred above the pity and bowels of a mother towards her child. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," saith the Lord (Isa 49:15).

God did once give Moses, as Christ's servant, an handful of his people, to carry them in his bosom, but no further than from Egypt to Canaan; and this Moses, as is said of him by the Holy Ghost, was the meekest man that was then to be found in the earth; yea, and he loved the people at a very great rate; yet neither would his meekness nor love hold out in this work; he failed and grew passionate, even to the provoking his God to anger under this work. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?" But

what was the affliction? Why, the Lord had said unto him, "Carry this people in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth the suckling child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers." And how then? Not I, says Moses, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because *it is* too heavy for me. If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness" (Num 11:11-15).

God gave them to Moses, that he might carry them in his bosom, that he might show gentleness and patience towards them, under all the provocations wherewith they would provoke him from that time till he had brought them to their land; but he failed in the work; he could not exercise it, because he had not that sufficiency of patience towards them. But now it is said of the person speaking in the text, "That he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa 40:11). Intimating, that this was one of the qualifications that God looked for, and knew was in him, when he gave his elect to him to save them.

Fourth, The Father giving of him to save them, declares that he hath a sufficiency of wisdom to wage with all those difficulties that

would attend him in his bringing of his sons and daughters unto glory. He made him to us to be wisdom; yea, he is called wisdom itself (1 Cor 1:30). And God saith, moreover, That "he shall deal prudently" (Isa 52:13). And, indeed, he that shall take upon him to be the Saviour of the people, had need be wise, because their adversaries are subtle above any. Here they are to encounter with the serpent, who for his subtilty outwitted our father and mother, when their wisdom was at highest (Gen 3). But if we talk of wisdom, our Jesus is wise, wiser than Solomon, wiser than all men, wiser than all angels; he is even the wisdom of God. "Christ is the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). And hence it is that he turneth sin, temptations, persecutions, falls, and all things, for good unto his people (Rom 8:28).

Now these things thus concluded on do show us also the great and wonderful love of the Father, in that he should choose out one every way so well prepared for the work of man's salvation.

Herein, indeed, perceive we the love of God. Huram gathered, that God loved Israel because he had given them such a king as Solomon (2 Chron 2:11). But how much more may we behold the love that God hath bestowed upon us, in that he hath given us to his Son, and

also given his Son for us?

[THE SON'S RECEPTION OF THE GIFT.]

"All that the Father giveth me SHALL COME." In these last words there is closely inserted an answer unto the Father's end in giving of his elect to Jesus Christ. The Father's end was, that they might come to him, and be saved by him; and that, says the Son, shall be done; neither sin nor Satan, neither flesh nor world, neither wisdom nor folly, shall hinder their coming to me. "They shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Here, therefore, the Lord Jesus positively determineth to put forth such a sufficiency of all grace as shall effectually perform this promise. "They shall come;" that is, he will cause them to come, by infusing of an effectual blessing into all the means that shall be used to that end. As was said to the evil spirit that was sent to persuade Ahab to go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead; Go: "Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so" (1 Kings 22:22). So will Jesus Christ say to the means that shall be used for the bringing of those to him that the Father hath given him. I say, he will bless it effectually to this very end; it shall persuade them, and shall prevail also; else, as I

said, the Father's end would be frustrate; for the Father's will is, that "of all which he hath given him, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day," (John 6:39); in order next unto himself, Christ the firstfruits, afterwards those that are his at his coming (1 Cor 15). But this cannot be done if there should fail to be a work of grace effectually wrought, though but in any one of them. But this shall not fail to be wrought in them, even in all the Father hath given him to save. "All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me," &c.

But to speak more distinctly to the words, THEY "SHALL COME," two things I would show you from these words —FIRST, *What it is to come to Christ*. SECOND, *What force there is in this promise, to make them come to him*.

[WHAT IT IS TO COME TO CHRIST.]

FIRST, I would show you WHAT IT IS TO COME TO CHRIST. This word *come* must be understood spiritually, not carnally; for many came to him carnally, or bodily, that had no saving advantage by him. Multitudes did thus come unto him in the days of his flesh; yea, innumerable companies. There is also at this day a formal customary coming to his

ordinances and ways of worship, which availeth not anything; but with them I shall not now meddle, for they are not intended in the text. The coming, then, intended in the text is to be understood of the coming of the mind to him, even the moving of the heart towards him. I say the moving of the heart towards him, from a sound sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation.

This description of coming to Christ divideth itself into two heads: *First*, That coming to Christ is a moving of the mind towards him. *Second*, That it is a moving of the mind towards him, from a sound sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation.

[*First*.] To speak to the first, *that it is a moving of the mind towards him*. This is evident; because coming hither or thither, if it be voluntary, is by an act of the mind or will; so coming to Christ is through the inclining of the will. "Thy people *shall be* willing" (Psa 110:3). This willingness of heart is it which sets the mind a-moving after or towards him. The church expresseth this moving of her mind towards Christ by the moving of her bowels. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him" (Can 5:4). "My bowels;" the passions

of my mind and affections; which passions of the affections are expressed by the yearning and sounding of the bowels, the yearning or passionate working of them, the sounding of them, or their making a noise for him (Gen 43:30; 1 Kings 3:26; Isa 16:11).

This, then, is the coming to Christ, even a moving towards him with the mind.[4] "And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live" (Eze 47:9). The water in this text is the grace of God in the doctrine of it. The living things are the children of men, to whom the grace of God, by the gospel, is preached. Now, saith he, every living thing which moveth, whithersoever the water shall come, shall live. And see how this word moveth is expounded by Christ himself, in the book of the Revelations: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will," that is, willing, "let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17).

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[4] To come unto Christ, in its proper sense, is to receive him as he is offered to us in the Word; to believe in him, as a suitable and all-sufficient Saviour; to submit to his government, in both suffering and doing his will, with all lowly-mindedness and humility; and this by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit upon the soul. —*Mason*.

So that to move in thy mind and will after Christ, is to be coming to him. There are many poor souls that are coming to Christ, that yet cannot tell how to believe it, because they think that coming to him is some strange and wonderful thing; and, indeed, so it is. But I mean, they overlook the inclination of their will, the moving of their mind, and the sounding of their bowels after him; and count these none of this strange and wonderful thing; when, indeed, it is a work of greatest wonder in this world, to see a man who was sometimes dead in sin possessed of the devil, an enemy to Christ and to all things spiritually good; I say, to see this man moving with his mind after the Lord Jesus Christ, is one of the highest wonders in the world.

Second, It is a moving of the mind towards him, *from a sound sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation*. Indeed, without this sense of a lost condition without him, there will be no moving of the mind towards him. A moving of their mouth there may be; "With their mouth they show much love" (Eze 33:31). Such a people as this will come as the true people cometh; that is, in show and outward appearance. And they will sit before God's ministers, as his people sit before them; and

they will hear his words too, but they will not do them; that is, will not come inwardly with their minds. "For with their mouth they shew much love, *but* their heart," or mind, "goeth after their covetousness." Now, all this is because they want an effectual sense of the misery of their state by nature; for not till they have that will they, in their mind, move after him. Therefore, thus it is said concerning the true comers, At "that day the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isa 27:13). They are then, as you see, the outcasts, and those that are ready to perish, that, indeed, have their minds effectually moved to come to Jesus Christ. This sense of things was that which made the three thousand come, that made Saul come, that made the jailer come, and that, indeed, makes all others come, that come effectually (Acts 2:8,18).

Of the true coming to Christ, the four lepers were a famous semblance, of whom you read, (2 Kings 7:3), &c. The famine in those days was sore in the land, there was no bread for the people; and as for that sustenance that was, which was asses' flesh and doves' dung,

that was only in Samaria, and of these the lepers had no share, for they were thrust without the city. Well, now they sat in the gate of the city, and hunger was, as I may say, making his last meal of them; and being, therefore, half dead already, what do they think of doing? Why, first they display the dismal colours of death before each other's faces, and then resolve what to do, saying, "If we say we will enter into the city, then famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: if we sit still here, we die also. Now, therefore, come, let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; if they kill us, we shall but die." Here, now, was necessity at work, and this necessity drove them to go thither for life, whither else they would never have gone for it. Thus it is with them that in truth come to Jesus Christ. Death is before them, they see it and feel it; he is feeding upon them, and will eat them quite up, if they come not to Jesus Christ; and therefore they come, even of necessity, being forced thereto by that sense they have of their being utterly and everlastingly undone, if they find not safety in him. These are they that will come. Indeed, these are they that are invited to come. "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28).

Take two or three things to make this more plain; to wit, That coming to Christ floweth from a sound sense of the absolute need that a man hath of him, as afore.

1. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them; I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble" (Jer 31:9). Mind it; they come with weeping and supplication; they come with prayers and tears. Now prayers and tears are the effects of a right sense of the need of mercy. Thus a senseless sinner cannot come, he cannot pray, he cannot cry, he cannot come sensible of what he sees not, nor feels. "In those days, and in that time - the children of Israel shall come; they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, *saying*, Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant *that* shall not be forgotten" (Jer 1:4,5).

2. This coming to Christ, it is called a running to him, as *flying* to him; a flying to him from wrath to come. By all which terms is set forth the sense of the man that comes; to wit, That he is affected with the sense of his sin, and the death due thereto; that he is sensible

that the avenger of blood pursues him, and that, therefore, he is thus off, if he makes not speed to the Son of God for life (Matt 3:7; Psa 143:9). Flying is the last work of a man in danger; all that are in danger do not fly; no, not all that see themselves in danger; flying is the last work of a man in danger; all that hear of danger will not fly. Men will consider if there be no other way of escape before they fly. Therefore, as I said, flying is the last thing. When all refuge fails, and a man is made to see that there is nothing left him but sin, death, and damnation, unless he flies to Christ for life; then he flies, and not till then.

3. That the true coming is from a sense of an absolute need of Jesus Christ to save, &c., is evident by the outcry that is made by them to come, even as they are coming to him, "Lord, save me," or I perish; "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and the like (Matt 14:30; Acts 2:37; 16:30). This language doth sufficiently discover that the truly-coming souls are souls sensible of their need of salvation by Jesus Christ; and, moreover, that there is nothing else that can help them but Christ.

4. It is yet further evident by these few things that follow: It is said that such are "pricked in their heart," that is, with the

sentence of death by the law; and the least prick in the heart kills a man (Acts 2:37). Such are said, as I said before, to weep, to tremble, and to be astonished in themselves at the evident and unavoidable danger that attends them, unless they fly to Jesus Christ (Acts 9:16).

5. Coming to Christ is attended with an honest and sincere forsaking of all for him. "If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26,27).

By these and the like expressions elsewhere, Christ describeth the true comer, or the man that indeed is coming to him; he is one that casteth all behind his back; he leaveth all, he forsaketh all, he hateth all things that would stand in his way to hinder his coming to Jesus Christ. There are a great many pretended comers to Jesus Christ in the world; and they are much like to the man you read of in Matthew 21:30, that said to his father's bidding, "I *go*, Sir, and went not." I say, there are a great many such comers to Jesus Christ; they say, when Christ calls by his gospel, I come, Sir; but still they abide by their pleasures and

carnal delights. They come not at all, only they give him a courtly compliment; but he takes notice of it, and will not let it pass for any more than a lie. He said, "I *go*, Sir, and went not;" he dissembled and lied. Take heed of this, you that flatter yourselves with your own deceivings. Words will not do with Jesus Christ. Coming *is coming*, and nothing else will go for coming with him.

[Objections that usually lie in the way of coming to Christ.]

Before I speak to the other head, I shall answer some objections that usually lie in the way of those that in truth are coming to Jesus Christ.

Objection 1. Though I cannot deny but my mind runs after Christ, and that too as being moved thereto from a sight and consideration of my lost condition, for I see without him I perish; yet I fear my ends are not right in coming to him.

Quest. Why, what is thine end in coming to Christ?

Answ. My end is, that I might have life, and be saved by Jesus Christ.

This is the objection; well, let me tell thee, that to come to Christ for life, and to be saved, although at present thou hast no other end, is

a lawful and good coming to Jesus Christ. This is evident, because Christ propoundeth life as the only argument to prevail with sinners to come to him, and so also blameth them because they come not to him for life. “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). Besides, there are many other scriptures whereby he allureth sinners to come to him, in which he propoundeth nothing to them but their safety. As, “whosoever believeth in him should not perish;” he that believeth is “passed from death unto life.” “He that believeth - shall be saved.” “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” And believing and coming are all one. So that you see, to come to Christ for life, is a lawful coming and good. In that he believeth, that he alone hath made atonement for sin (Rom 2). And let me add over and above, that for a man to come to Christ for life, though he comes to him for nothing else but life, it is to give much honour to him.

1. He honoureth the word of Christ, and consenteth to the truth of it; and that in these two general heads. (1.) He consenteth to the truth of all those sayings that testify that sin is most abominable in itself, dishonourable to God, and damnable to the soul of man; for thus saith the man that cometh to Jesus Christ (Jer

44:4; Rom 2:23; 6:23; 2 Thess 2:12). (2.) In that he believeth, as the word hath said, that there is in the world's best things, righteousness and all, nothing but death and damnation; for so also says the man that comes to Jesus Christ for life (Rom 7:24,25; 8:2,3; 2 Cor 3:6-8).

2. He honoureth Christ's person, in that he believeth that there is life in him, and that he is able to save him from death, hell, the devil, and damnation; for unless a man believes this, he will not come to Christ for life (Heb 7:24,25).

3. He honoureth him, in that he believeth that he is authorized of the Father to give life to those that come to him for it (John 5:11,12; 17:1-3).

4. He honoureth the priesthood of Jesus Christ. (1.) In that he believeth that Christ hath more power to save from sin by the sacrifice that he hath offered for it, than hath all law, devils, death, or sin to condemn. He that believes not this, will not come to Jesus Christ for life (Acts 13:38; Heb 2:14,15; Rev 1:17,18). (2.) In that he believeth that Christ, according to his office, will be most faithful and merciful in the discharge of his office. This must be included in the faith of him that comes for life to Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1-3; Heb 2:17,18).

5. Further, He that cometh to Jesus Christ for life, taketh part with him against sin, and against the ragged and imperfect righteousness of the world; yea, and against false Christs, and damnable errors, that set themselves against the worthiness of his merits and sufficiency. This is evident, for that such a soul singleth Christ out from them all, as the only one that can save.

6. Therefore as Noah, at God's command, thou preparest this ark, for the saving of thyself, by which also thou condemnest the world, and art become heir of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb 11:7). Wherefore, coming sinner, be content; he that cometh to Jesus Christ, believeth too that he is willing to show mercy to, and have compassion upon him, though unworthy, that comes to him for life. And therefore thy soul lieth not only under a special invitation to come, but under a promise too of being accepted and forgiven (Matt 11:28).

All these particular parts and qualities of faith are in that soul that comes to Jesus Christ for life, as is evident to any indifferent judgment. For, will he that believeth not the testimony of Christ concerning the baseness of sin, and the insufficiency of the righteousness of the world, come to Christ for life? No. He

that believeth not this testimony of the word, comes not. He that believeth that there is life anywhere else, comes not. He that questions whether the Father hath given Christ power to forgive, comes not. He that thinketh that there is more in sin, in the law, in death, and the devil, to destroy, than there is in Christ to save, comes not. He also that questions his faithful management of his priesthood for the salvation of sinners, comes not.

Thou, then, that art indeed the coming sinner, believest all this. True, perhaps thou dost not believe with that full assurance, nor hast thou leisure to take notice of thy faith as to these distinct acts of it; but yet all this faith is in him coming to Christ for life. And the faith that thus worketh, is the faith of the best and purest kind; because this man comes alone as a sinner, and as seeing that life is, and is to be had only in Jesus Christ.

Before I conclude my answer to this objection, take into thy consideration these two things.

1st. [*Consider*] that the cities of refuge were erected for those that were dead in law, and that yet would live by grace; even for those that were to fly thither for life from the avenger of blood that pursueth after them. And it is worth your noting, that those that were

upon their flight thither, are in a peculiar manner called the people of God: "Cast ye up, cast ye up," saith God; "prepare the way; take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people" (Isa 57:14). This is meant of preparing the way to the city of refuge, that the slayers might escape thither; which flying slayers are here, by way of specialty, called the people of God; even those of them that escaped thither for life.

2dly. [*Consider*] that of Ahab, when Benhadad sent to him for life, saying, "Thus saith thy servant Benhadad, I pray thee let me live." Though Benhadad had sought the crown, kingdom, yea, and also the life of Ahab, yet how effectually doth Benhadad prevail with him! Is Benhadad yet alive? saith Ahab; He is my brother; yea, go ye, bring him to me. So he made him ride in his chariot (1 Kings 20).

Coming sinner, what thinkest thou? If Jesus Christ had as little goodness in him as Ahab, he might grant an humble Benhadad life; thou neither beggest of him his crown and dignity; life, eternal life, will serve thy turn. How much more then shalt thou have it, since thou hast to deal with him who is goodness and mercy itself! yea, since thou art also called upon, yea, greatly encouraged by a promise of life, to come unto him for life! Read also these

Scriptures, Numbers 35:11,14,15, Joshua 20:1-6, Hebrews 6:16-21.

Object. 2. When I say I only seek myself, I mean I do not find that I do design God's glory in mine own salvation by Christ, and that makes me fear I do not come aright.

Answ. Where doth Christ Jesus require such a qualification of those that are coming to him for life? Come thou for life, and trouble not thy head with such objections against thyself, and let God and Christ alone to glorify themselves in the salvation of such a worm as thou art. The Father saith to the Son, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." God propoundeth life to sinners, as the argument to prevail with them to come to him for life; and Christ says plainly, "I am come that they might have life" (John 10:10). He hath no need of thy designs, though thou hast need of his. Eternal life, pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath to come, Christ propounds to thee, and these be the things that thou hast need of; besides, God will be gracious and merciful to worthless, undeserving wretches; come then as such an one, and lay no stumblingblocks in the way to him, but come to him for life, and live (John 5:34; 10:10; 3:36; Matt 1:21; Prov 8:35,36; 1 Thess 1:10; John 11:25,26).

When the jailer said, "Sirs, What must I do to be saved?" Paul did not so much as once ask him, What is your end in this question? do you design the glory of God, in the salvation of your soul? He had more wit; he knew that such questions as these would have been but fools' babbles about, instead of a sufficient salve[5] "Which Cambell seeing, though he could not *salve*, to so weighty a question as this. Wherefore, since this poor wretch lacked salvation by Jesus Christ, I mean to be saved from hell and death, which he knew, now, was due to him for the sins that he had committed, Paul bids him, like a poor condemned sinner as he was, to proceed still in this his way of self-seeking, saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30-32). I know that afterwards thou wilt desire to glorify Christ by walking in the way of his precepts; but at present thou wantest life; the avenger of blood is behind thee, and the devil like a roaring lion is behind thee; well, come now, and obtain life from these; and when thou hast obtained some comfortable

[5] "Salve;" relief, aid, or help. He done undoe, yet for to *salve* his name
And purchase honour to his friend's behalve,
This goodly counterfesaunce he did frame."
—Spenser's *Faery Queen*.

persuasion that thou art made partaker of life by Christ, then, and not till then, thou wilt say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me *bless* his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:[6] who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies" (Psa 103:1-4).

Object. 3. But I cannot believe that I come to Christ aright, because sometimes I am apt to question his very being and office to save.

Thus to do is horrible; but mayest thou not judge amiss in this matter?

How can I judge amiss, when I judge as I feel? Poor soul! Thou mayest judge amiss for all that. Why, saith the sinner, I think that these questionings come from my heart. Let me answer. That which comes from thy heart, comes from thy will and affections, from thy understanding, judgment, and conscience, for these must acquiesce in thy questioning, if thy questioning be with thy heart. And how sayest thou, for to name no more, dost thou with thy affection and conscience thus question? Answ. No, my conscience trembles when such thoughts come into my mind; and my

[6] We cannot remember *all* God's benefits, but how prone we are to forget them all! —Ed.

affections are otherwise inclined.

Then I conclude, that these things are either suddenly injected by the devil, or else are the fruits of that body of sin and death that yet dwells within thee, or perhaps from both together.

If they come wholly from the devil, as they seem, because thy conscience and affections are against them, or if they come from that body of death that is in thee, and be not thou curious in inquiring from whether of them they come, the safest way is to lay enough at thy own door; nothing of this should hinder thy coming, nor make thee conclude thou comest not aright.[7] And before I leave thee, let me a little query with thee about this matter.

1. Dost thou like these wicked blasphemies? Answ. No, no, their presence and working kills me.

2. Dost thou mourn for them, pray against

[7] Christian, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, was thus exercised: —"I took notice that now poor Christian was so confounded that he did not know his own voice; and thus I perceived it: —Just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind." See also *Grace Abounding*, No. 100-102. —Ed.

them, and hate thyself because of them? Answ. Yes, yes; but that which afflicts me is, I do not prevail against them.

3. Dost thou sincerely choose, mightest thou have thy choice, that thy heart might be affected and taken with the things that are best, most heavenly, and holy? Answ. With all my heart, and death the next hour, if it were God's will, rather than thus to sin against him.

Well then, thy not liking of them, thy mourning for them, thy praying against them, and thy loathing thyself because of them, with thy sincere choosing of those thoughts for thy delectation that are heavenly and holy, clearly declares, that these things are not countenanced either with thy will, affections, understanding, judgment, or conscience; and so, that thy heart is not in them, but that rather they come immediately from the devil, or arise from the body of death that is in thy flesh, of which thou oughtest thus to say, "Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom 7:17).

I will give thee a pertinent instance. In Deuteronomy 22, thou mayest read of a betrothed damsel, one betrothed to her beloved, one that had given him her heart and mouth, as thou hast given thyself to Christ; yet was she met with as she walked in the field, by one that

forced her, because he was stronger than she. Well, what judgment now doth God, the righteous judge, pass upon the damsel for this? "The man only that lay with her," saith God, "shall die. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; *there is* in the damsel no sin *worthy* of death. For, as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so *is* this matter; for he found her in the field, *and* the betrothed damsel cried, and *there was* none to save her" (Deut 22:25-27).

Thou art this damsel. The man that forced thee with these blasphemous thoughts, is the devil; and he lighteth upon thee in a fit place, even in the field, as thou art wandering after Jesus Christ; but thou criest out, and by thy cry did show, that thou abhorrest such wicked lewdness. Well, the Judge of all the earth will do right; he will not lay the sin at thy door, but at his that offered the violence. And for thy comfort take this into consideration, that he came to heal them "that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10:38).

Object. 4. But, saith another, I am so heartless, so slow, and, as I think, so indifferent in my coming, that, to speak truth, I know not whether my kind of coming ought to be called a coming to Christ.

Answ. You know that I told you at first, that

coming to Christ is a moving of the heart and affections towards him.

But, saith the soul, my dullness and indifferency in all holy duties, demonstrate my heartlessness in coming; and to come, and not with the heart, signifies nothing at all.

1. The moving of the heart after Christ is not to be discerned, at all times, by thy sensible affectionate performance of duties, but rather by those secret groanings and complaints which thy soul makes to God against that sloth that attends thee in duties.

2. But grant it to be even as thou sayest it is, that thou comest so slowly, &c., yet, since Christ bids them come that come not at all, surely they may be accepted that come, though attended with those infirmities which thou at present groanest under. He saith, "and him that cometh;" he saith not, If they come sensible; so fast; but, "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He saith also in the ninth of Proverbs, "*As for* him that wanteth understanding," that is, an heart (for oftentimes the understanding is taken for the heart), "come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled."

3. Thou mayest be vehement in thy spirit in coming to Jesus Christ, and yet be plagued with sensible sloth; so was the church when

she cried, "Draw me, we will run after thee;" and Paul, when he said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me" (Song 14; Rom 7; Gal 5:19). The works, strugglings, and oppositions of the flesh, are more manifest than are the works of the Spirit in our hearts, and so are sooner felt than they. What then? Let us not be discouraged at the sight and feeling of our own infirmities, but run the faster to Jesus Christ for salvation.

4. Get thy heart warmed with the sweet promise of Christ's acceptance of the coming sinner, and that will make thee make more haste unto him. Discouraging thoughts they are like unto cold weather, they benumb the senses, and make us go ungainly about our business; but the sweet and warm gleads[8] of promise are like the comfortable beams of the sun, which liven and refresh.[9] You see how little the bee and fly do play in the air in winter; why, the cold hinders them from doing it; but

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[8] "Warm gleads;" from Saxon *glow*, anything heated or hot.

"My destiny to behold her doth me leade,
And yet I know I runne into the *gleade*." —*Wyatt*. —Ed.

[9] Many misspend their time in poring upon their own hearts, to find out some evidence of their interest in Christ, when they should rather be employed in receiving Christ, and walking in him, by a confident faith grounded on the Divine testimony. —*Mason*.

when the wind and sun is warm, who so busy as they?

5. But again, he that comes to Christ, flies for his life. Now, there is no man that flies for his life, that thinks he speeds fast enough on his journey; no, could he, he would willingly take a mile at a step. O my sloth and heartlessness, sayest thou! "Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm *and* tempest" (Psa 55:6,8).

Poor coming soul, thou art like the man that would ride full gallop, whose horse will hardly trot! Now, the desire of his mind is not to be judged of by the slow pace of the dull jade he rides on, but by the hitching, and kicking, and spurring, as he sits on his back. Thy flesh is like this dull jade; it will not gallop after Christ; it will be backward, though thy soul and heaven lie at stake.[10] But be of good comfort, Christ judgeth not according to the fierceness of outward motion (Mark 10:17) but according to the sincerity of the heart and inward parts (John 1:47; Psa 51:6; Matt 26:41).

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[10] How striking are Bunyan's illustrations! The devil, as a roaring lion, is in pursuit of the flying sinner; he would flee faster than his infirmities will let him. We cannot wonder that modern preachers borrowed so vivid and truthful a figure. —Ed.

6. Ziba, in appearance, came to David much faster than did Mephibosheth; but yet his heart was not so upright in him to David as was his. It is true, Mephibosheth had a check from David; for, said he, "Why wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?" But when David came to remember that Mephibosheth was lame, for that was his plea —"thy servant is lame" (2 Sam 19), he was content, and concluded, he would have come after him faster than he did; and Mephibosheth appealed to David, who was in those days as an angel of God, to know all things that are done in the earth, if he did not believe that the reason of his backwardness lay in his lameness, and not in his mind. Why, poor coming sinner, thou canst not come to Christ with that outward swiftness of a courier as many others do; but doth the reason of thy backwardness lie in thy mind and will, or in the sluggishness of the flesh? Canst thou say sincerely, "The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak" (Matt 26:41). Yea, canst thou appeal to the Lord Jesus, who knoweth perfectly the very inmost thought of thy heart, that this is true? Then take this for thy comfort, he hath said, "I will assemble her that halteth - I will make her that halted a remnant," (Micah 4:6), "and I will save her that halteth" (Zeph 3:19). What canst thou have more from the

sweet lips of the Son of God? But,

7. I read of some that are to follow Christ in chains; I say, to come after him in chains. "Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee: in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee: they shall make supplication unto thee, *saying* - Surely *there* is none else" to save (Isa 45:14). Surely they that come after Christ in chains, come to him in great difficulty, because their steps, by the chains, are straitened. And what chains are so heavy as those that discourage thee? Thy chain, which is made up of guilt and filth, is heavy; it is a wretched bond about thy neck, by which thy strength doth fail (Lam 1:14; 3:18). But come, though thou comest in chains; it is glory to Christ that a sinner comes after him in chains. The chinking of thy chains, though troublesome to thee, are not, nor can be obstruction to thy salvation; it is Christ's work and glory to save thee from thy chains, to enlarge thy steps, and set thee at liberty. The blind man, though called, surely could not come apace to Jesus Christ, but Christ could stand still, and stay for him (Mark 10:49). True, "He rideth upon the wings of the wind;" but

yet he is long-suffering, and his long-suffering is salvation to him that cometh to him (2 Peter 3:9).

8. Hadst thou seen those that came to the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh, how slowly, how hobblingly, they came to him, by reason of their infirmities; and also how friendly, and kindly, and graciously, he received them, and gave them the desire of their hearts, thou wouldest not, as thou dost, make such objections against thyself, in thy coming to Jesus Christ.

Object. 5. But, says another, I fear I come too late; I doubt I have staid too long; I am afraid the door is shut.

Answ. Thou canst never come too late to Jesus Christ, if thou dost come. This is manifest by two instances.

1. By the man that came to him at the eleventh hour. This man was idle all the day long. He had a whole gospel day to come in, and he played it all away save only the last hour thereof. But at last, at the eleventh hour, he came, and goes into the vineyard to work with the rest of the labourers, that had borne the burden and heat of the day. Well, but how was he received by the lord of the vineyard? Why, when pay-day came, he had even as much as the rest; yea, had his money first. True, the

others murmured at him; but what did the Lord Jesus answer them? "Is thine eye evil, because I am good? I will give unto this last, even as unto thee" (Matt 20:14,15).

2. The other instance is, the thief upon the cross. He came late also, even as at an hour before his death; yea, he stayed from Jesus Christ as long as he had liberty to be a thief, and longer too; for could he have deluded the judge, and by lying words have escaped his just condemnation, for ought I know, he had not come as yet to his Saviour; but being convicted, and condemned to die, yea, fastened to the cross, that he might die like a rogue, as he was in his life; behold the Lord Jesus, when this wicked one, even now, desireth mercy at his hands, tells him, and that without the least reflection upon him, for his former misspent life, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Let no man turn this grace of God into wantonness. My design is now to encourage the coming soul.

Object. But is not the door of mercy shut against some before they die?

Answ. Yea; and God forbids that prayers should be made to him for them (Jer 6:16; Jude 22).

Quest. Then, why may not I doubt that I may be one of these?

Answ. By no means, if thou art coming to Jesus Christ; because when God shuts the door upon men, he gives them no heart to come to Jesus Christ. "None come but those to whom it is given of the Father." But thou comest, therefore it is given to thee of the Father.

Be sure, therefore, if the Father hath given thee an heart to come to Jesus Christ, the gate of mercy yet stands open to thee. For it stands not with the wisdom of God to give strength to come to the birth, and yet to shut up the womb, (Isa 66:9); to give grace to come to Jesus Christ, and yet shut up the door of his mercy upon thee. "Incline your ear," saith he, "and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David" (Isa 55:3).

Object. But it is said, that some knocked when the door was shut.

Answ. Yes; but the texts in which these knockers are mentioned, are to be referred unto the day of judgment, and not to the coming of the sinner to Christ in this life. See the texts, Matthew 15:11, Luke 13:24,25. These, therefore, concern thee nothing at all, that art coming to Jesus Christ, thou art coming NOW! "Now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). Now God is upon the mercy-seat; now Christ Jesus sits by,

continually pleading the victory of his blood for sinners; and now, even as long as this world lasts, this word of the text shall still be free, and fully fulfilled; "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Sinner, the greater sinner thou art, the greater need of mercy thou hast, and the more will Christ be glorified thereby. Come then, come and try; come, taste and see how good the Lord is to an undeserving sinner!

Object. 6. But, says another*, I am fallen since I began to come to Christ; therefore I fear I did not come aright, and so consequently that Christ will not receive me.*

Answ. Falls are dangerous, for they dishonour Christ, wound the conscience, and cause the enemies of God to speak reproachfully. But it is no good argument, I am fallen, therefore I was not coming aright to Jesus Christ. If David, and Solomon, and Peter, had thus objected against themselves, they had added to their griefs; and yet, at least they had as much cause as thou. A man whose steps are ordered by the Lord, and whose goings the Lord delights in, may yet be overtaken with a temptation that may cause him to fall[11] (Psa

[11] A Christian is "never safe but when watchful;" he should keep a jealous eye on his own weakness, and a believing eye on the promise and power of Christ, and

37:23,24). Did not Aaron fall; yea, and Moses himself? What shall we say of Hezekiah and Jehosaphat? There are, therefore, falls and falls; falls pardonable and falls unpardonable. Falls unpardonable are falls against light, from the faith, to the despising of, and trampling upon Jesus Christ and his blessed undertakings (Heb 6:2-5; 10:28,29). Now, as for such, there remains no more sacrifice for sin. Indeed, they have no heart, no mind, no desire to come to Jesus Christ for life, therefore they must perish. Nay, says the Holy Ghost, "It is impossible that they should be renewed again unto repentance." Therefore these God had no compassion for, neither ought we; but for other falls though they be dreadful, and God will chastise his people for them, they do not prove thee a graceless man, one not coming to Jesus Christ for life.

It is said of the child in the gospel, that while "he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him" (Luke 9:42). Dejected sinner, it is no wonder that thou hast caught a fall in coming to Jesus Christ. Is it not rather to be wondered at, that thou hast not caught before this a thousand times a thousand falls? considering, 1. What fools we are by nature. 2.

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he shall be preserved from falling. —*Mason*.

What weaknesses are in us. 3. What mighty powers the fallen angels, our implacable enemies, are. 4. Considering also how often the coming man is benighted in his journey; and also what stumblingblocks do lie in his way. 5. Also his familiars, that were so before, now watch for his halting, and seek by what means they may to cause him to fall by the hand of their strong ones.

What then? Must we, because of these temptations, incline to fall? No. Must we not fear falls? Yes. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12). Yet let him not utterly be cast down; "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up those that are bowed down." Make not light of falls! Yet, hast thou fallen? "Ye have," said Samuel, "done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord," but serve him with a perfect heart, and turn not aside, "for the Lord will not forsake his people," and he counteth the coming sinner one of them, "because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people" (1 Sam 12:20-22).

[WHAT FORCE THERE IS IN THE PROMISE TO MAKE THEM COME TO CHRIST.]

SECOND, "Shall come to me." Now we come to show WHAT FORCE THERE IS IN

THIS PROMISE TO MAKE THEM COME TO HIM. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." I will speak to this promise, *First*, In general. *Second*, In particular.

[*First*], *In general*. This word SHALL is confined to these ALL that are given to Christ. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Hence I conclude,

1. That coming to Jesus Christ aright is an effect of their being, of God, given to Christ before. Mark, *They* shall come. Who? *Those* that are given. They *come*, then, because they were *given*, "thine they were, and thou gavest them me." Now, this is indeed a singular comfort to them that are coming in truth to Christ, to think that the reason why they come is, because they were given of the Father before to him. Thus, then, may the coming soul reason with himself as he comes. Am I coming, indeed, to Jesus Christ? This coming of mine is not to be attributed to me or my goodness, but to the grace and gift of God to Christ. God gave first my person to him, and, therefore, hath now given me a heart to come.

2. This word, *shall come*, maketh thy coming not only the fruit of the gift of the Father, but also of the purpose of the Son; for these words are a Divine purpose; they show us the heavenly determination of the Son. "The

Father hath given them to me, and *they shall*; yea, *they shall* come to me." Christ is as full in his resolution to save those given to him as is the Father in giving of them. Christ prizeth the gift of his Father; he will lose nothing of it; he is resolved to save it every whit by his blood, and to raise it up again at the last day; and thus he fulfills his Father's will, and accomplisheth his own desires (John 6:39).

3. These words, *shall come*, make thy coming to be also the effect of an absolute promise; coming sinner, thou art concluded in a promise; thy coming is the fruit of the faithfulness of an absolute promise. It was this promise, by the virtue of which thou at first receivedst strength to come; and this is the promise, by the virtue of which thou shalt be effectually brought to him. It was said to Abraham, "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." This son was Isaac. Mark! "Sarah shall have a son;" there is the promise. And Sarah had a son; there was the fulfilling of the promise; and, therefore, was Isaac called the child of the promise (Gen 17:19; 18:10; Rom 9:9).

Sarah shall have a son. But how, if Sarah be past age? Why, still the promise continues to say, Sarah shall have a son. But how, if Sarah be barren? Why, still the promise says, Sarah

shall have a son. But Abraham's body is now dead? Why, the promise is still the same, Sarah shall have a son. Thus, you see what virtue there is in an absolute promise; it carrieth enough in its own bowels to accomplish the thing promised, whether there be means or no in us to effect it. Wherefore, this promise in the text, being an absolute promise, by virtue of it, not by virtue of ourselves, or by our own inducements, do we come to Jesus Christ: for so are the words of the text: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

Therefore is every sincere comer to Jesus Christ called also a child of the promise. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise," (Gal 4:28); that is, we are the children that God hath promised to Jesus Christ, and given to him; yea, the children that Jesus Christ hath promised shall come to him. "All that the Father giveth me shall come."

4. This word, shall come, engageth Christ to communicate all manner of grace to those thus given him to make them effectually to come to him. "They shall come;" that is, not if they will, but if grace, all grace, if power, wisdom, a new heart, and the Holy Spirit, and all joining together, can make them come. I say, this word, shall come, being absolute, hath no dependence upon our own will, or power, or

goodness; but it engageth for us even God himself, Christ himself, the Spirit himself. When God had made that absolute promise to Abraham, that Sarah "should have a son," Abraham did not at all look at any qualification in himself, because the promise looked at none; but as God had, by the promise, absolutely promised him a son; so he considered now not his own body now dead, nor yet the barrenness of Sarah's womb. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform" (Rom 4:20,21). He had promised, and had promised absolutely, Sarah shall have a son. Therefore, Abraham looks that he, to wit, God, must fulfil the condition of it. Neither is this expectation of Abraham disapproved by the Holy Ghost, but accounted good and laudable; it being that by which he gave glory to God. The Father, also, hath given to Christ a certain number of souls for him to save; and he himself hath said, "They shall come to him." Let the church of God then live in a joyful expectation of the utmost accomplishment of this promise; for assuredly it shall be fulfilled, and not one thousandth part of a tittle thereof shall fail. "They SHALL come to me."

[Second, In particular.] And now, before I go any further, I will more particularly inquire into the nature of an absolute promise.

1. We call that an absolute promise *that is made without any condition*; or more fully thus: That is an absolute promise of God, or of Christ, which maketh over to this or that man any saving, spiritual blessing, without a condition to be done on our part for the obtaining thereof. And this we have in hand is such an one. Let the best Master of Arts on earth show me, if he can, any condition in this text depending upon any qualification in us, which is not by the same promise concluded, shall be by the Lord Jesus effected in us.

2. An absolute promise therefore is, as we say, *without if or and*; that is, *it requireth nothing of us, that itself might be accomplished*. It saith not, They shall, if they will; but they shall: not, they shall, if they use the means; but, they shall. You may say, that a will and the use of the means is supposed, though not expressed. But I answer, No, by no means; that is, as a condition of this promise. If they be at all included in the promise, they are included there as the fruit of the absolute promise, not as if it expected the qualification to arise from us. "Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power" (Psa 110:3). That is

another absolute promise. But doth that promise suppose a willingness in us, as a condition of God's making us willing? They shall be willing, if they are willing; or, they shall be willing, if they will be willing. This is ridiculous; there is nothing of this supposed. The promise is absolute as to us; all that it engageth for its own accomplishment is, the mighty power of Christ and his faithfulness to accomplish.

3. The *difference*, therefore, *betwixt the absolute and conditional promise* is this:

(1.) They differ in their terms. The absolute promises say, I will, and you shall: the other, I will, if you will; or, Do this, and thou shalt live (Jer 4:1; 31:31-33; Eze 18:30-32; 36:24-34; Heb 8:7-13; Matt 19:21).

(2.) They differ in their way of communicating of good things to men; the absolute ones communicate things freely, only of grace; the other, if there be that qualification in us, that the promise calls for, not else.

(3.) The absolute promises therefore engage God, the other engage us: I mean, God only, us only.

(4.) Absolute promises must be fulfilled; conditional may, or may not be fulfilled. The absolute ones must be fulfilled, because of the

faithfulness of God; the other may not, because of the unfaithfulness of men.

(5.) Absolute promises have therefore a sufficiency in themselves to bring about their own fulfilling; the conditional have not so. The absolute promise is therefore a big-bellied promise, because it hath in itself a fullness of all desired things for us; and will, when the time of that promise is come, yield to us mortals that which will verily save us; yea, and make us capable of answering of the demands of the promise that is conditional.

4. Wherefore, though there be a real, yea, an eternal difference, in these things, with others, betwixt the conditional and absolute promise; yet again, *in other respects, there is a blessed harmony betwixt them*; as may be seen in these particulars. The conditional promise calls for repentance, the absolute promise gives it (Acts 5:31). The conditional promise calls for faith, the absolute promise gives it (Zeph 3:12; Rom 15:12). The conditional promise calls for a new heart, the absolute promise gives it (Eze 36:25,26). The conditional promise calleth for holy obedience, the absolute promise giveth it, or causeth it (Eze 36:27).

5. And as they harmoniously agree in this, so again *the conditional promise blesseth the man, who by the absolute promise is endued*

with its fruit. As, for instance, the absolute promise maketh men upright; and then the conditional follows, saying, "Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Psa 119:1). The absolute promise giveth to this man the fear of the Lord; and then the conditional followeth, saying, "Blessed *is* every one that feareth the Lord" (Psa 128:1). The absolute promise giveth faith, and then this conditional follows, saying, "Blessed is she that believed" (Zeph 3:12; Luke 1:45). The absolute promise brings free forgiveness of sins; and then says the condition, "Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom 4:7). The absolute promise says, that God's elect shall hold out to the end; then the conditional follows with his blessings, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (1 Peter 1:4-6; Matt 24:13).

Thus do the promises gloriously serve one another and us, in this their harmonious agreement.

Now, the promise under consideration is an absolute promise. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

This promise therefore is, as is said, a big-bellied promise, and hath in itself all those things to bestow upon us that the conditional

calleth for at our hands. They shall come! Shall they come? Yes, they shall come. But how, if they want those things, those graces, power, and heart, without which they cannot come? Why, *Shall-come* answereth all this, and all things else that may in this manner be objected. And here I will take the liberty to amplify things.

[Objections to the absoluteness of this promise (the force of SHALL-COME) answered.]

Object. 1. But they are dead, dead in trespasses and sins, how shall they then come?

Answ. Why, *Shall-come* can raise them from this death. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Thus, therefore, is this impediment by *Shall-come* removed out of the way. They shall heal, they shall live.

Object. 2. But they are Satan's captives; he takes them captive at his will, and he is stronger than they: how then can they come?

Answ. Why, *Shall-come* hath also provided an help for this. Satan had bound that daughter of Abraham so, that she could by no means lift up herself; but yet *Shall-come* set her free both in body and soul. Christ will have them turned from the power of Satan to God.

But what! Must it be, if they turn themselves, or do something to merit of him to turn them? No, he will do it freely, of his own good will. Alas! Man, whose soul is possessed by the devil, is turned whithersoever that governor listeth, is taken captive by him, notwithstanding its natural powers, at his will; but what will he do? Will he hold him when *Shall-come* puts forth itself, will he then let[12] him, for coming to Jesus Christ? No, that cannot be! His power is but the power of a fallen angel, but *Shall-come* is the Word of God. Therefore *Shall-come* must be fulfilled; "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

There were seven devils in Mary Magdalene, too many for her to get from under the power of; but when the time was come that *Shall--come* was to be fulfilled upon her, they give place, fly from her, and she comes indeed to Jesus Christ, according as it is written, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

The man that was possessed with a legion, (Mark 5), was too much by them captivated for him by human force to come; yea, had he had, to boot, all the men under heaven to help him, had he that said, He shall come, withheld his mighty power: but when this promise was to be

[12] "Let him;" hinder him. See 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Obsolete. —*Imperial Dictionary*. —Ed.

fulfilled upon him, then he comes; nor could all their power hinder his coming. It was also this *Shall-come* that preserved him from death; when by these evil spirits he was hurled hither and thither; and it was by the virtue of *Shall-come* that at last he was set at liberty from them, and enabled indeed to come to Christ. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

Object. 3. They shall, you say; but how if they will not; and, if so, then what can Shall-come do?

Answ. True, there are some men say, "We are lords; we will come no more unto thee" (Jer 2:31). But as God says in another case, if they are concerned in *Shall-come* to me, they "shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs" (Jer 41:28). Here, then, is the case; we must now see who will be the liar, he that saith, I will not; or he that saith, He shall come to me. You shall come, says God; I will not come, saith the sinner. Now, as sure as he is concerned in this *Shall-come*, God will make that man eat his own words; for I will not, is the unadvised conclusion of a crazy-headed sinner; but *Shall-come* was spoken by him that is of power to perform his word. "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," said the Father. But he answered, and said, I will not come. What now?

will he be able to stand to his refusal? will he pursue his desperate denial? No, "he afterwards repented and went." But how came he by that repentance? Why, it was wrapped up for him in the absolute promise; and therefore, notwithstanding he said, "I will not, he afterwards repented and went." By this parable Jesus Christ sets forth the obstinacy of the sinners of the world, as touching their coming to him; they will not come, though threatened: yea, though life be offered them upon condition of coming.

But now, when *Shall-come*, the absolute promise of God, comes to be fulfilled upon them, then they come; because by that promise a cure is provided against the rebellion of their will. "Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power"(Psa 110:3). Thy people, what people? Why, the people that thy Father hath given thee. The obstinacy and plague that is in the will of that people, shall be taken away; and they shall be made willing; *Shall-come* will make them willing to come to thee.

He that had seen Paul in the midst of his outrages against Christ, his gospel, and people, would hardly have thought that he would ever have been a follower of Jesus Christ, especially since he went not against his conscience in his persecuting of them. He thought verily that he

ought to do what he did. But we may see what *Shall-come* can do, when it comes to be fulfilled upon the soul of a rebellious sinner: he was a chosen vessel, given by the Father to the Son; and now the time being come that *Shall-come* was to take him in hand, behold, he is over-mastered, astonished, and with trembling and reverence, in a moment becomes willing to be obedient to the heavenly call (Acts 9).

And were not they far gone, that you read of, (Acts 2) who had their hands and hearts in the murder of the Son of God; and to show their resolvedness never to repent of that horrid fact, said, "His blood *be* on us and on our children?" But must their obstinacy rule? Must they be bound to their own ruin, by the rebellion of their stubborn wills? No, not those of these the Father gave to Christ; wherefore, at the times appointed, *Shall-come* breaks in among them; the absolute promise takes them in hand; and then they come indeed, crying out to Peter, and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" No stubbornness of man's will can stand, when God hath absolutely said the contrary; *Shall-come* can make them come "as doves to their windows," that had afore resolved never to come to him.

The Lord spake unto Manasseh, and to his

people, by the prophets, but would he hear? No, he would not. But shall Manasseh come off thus? No, he *shall not*. Therefore, he being also one of those whom the Father had given to the Son, and so falling within the bounds and reach of *Shall-come*, at last *Shall-come* takes him in hand, and then he comes indeed. He comes bowing and bending; he humbles himself greatly, and made supplication to the Lord, and prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and had mercy upon him (2 Chron 30:10).

The thief upon the cross, at first, did rail with his fellow upon Jesus Christ; but he was one that the Father had given to him, and, therefore, *Shall-come* must handle him and his rebellious will. And behold, so soon as he is dealt withal, by virtue of that absolute promise, how soon he buckleth, leaves his railing, falls to supplicating of the Son of God for mercy; "Lord," saith he, "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Matt 27:44; Luke 23:40-42).

Object. 4. They shall come, say you, *but how if they be blind, and see not the way*? For some are kept off from Christ, not only by the obstinacy of their will, but by the blindness of their mind. Now, if they be blind, how shall they come?

Answ. The question is not, Are they blind? But, Are they within the reach and power of *Shall-come*? If so, that Christ that said, they shall come, will find them eyes, or a guide or both, to bring them to himself. "Must is for the king." If they shall come, they shall come. No impediment shall hinder.

The Thessalonians' darkness did not hinder them from being the children of light; "I am come," said Christ, "that they which see not might see." And if he saith, See, ye "blind that have eyes," who shall hinder it? (Eph 5:8; John 9:39; Isa 29:18; 43:8).

This promise, therefore, is, as I said, a big-bellied promise, having in the bowels of it, all things that shall occur to the complete fulfilling of itself. *They shall come*. But it is objected, that they are blind. Well, *Shall-come* is still the same, and continueth to say, "They shall come to me." Therefore he saith again, "I will bring the blind by a way *that* they know not, I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isa 42:16).

Mark, I will bring them, though they be blind; I will bring them by a way they know not; I will —I will; and therefore "they shall come

to me."

Object. 5. But how, if they have exceeded many in sin, and so made themselves far more abominable? They are the ringleading sinners in the county, the town, or family.

Answ. What then? Shall that hinder the execution of *Shall-come*? It is not transgressions, nor sins, nor all their transgressions in all their sins, if they by the Father are given to Christ to save them, that shall hinder this promise, that it should not be fulfilled upon them. "In those days, and in that time," saith the Lord, "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall be* none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found" (Jer 50:20). Not that they had none, for they abounded in transgression, (2 Chron 33:9; Eze 16:48), but God would pardon, cover, hide, and put them away, by virtue of his absolute promise, by which they are given to Christ to save them. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall bear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity

that I procure unto it" (Jer 33:8,9).

Object. 6. But how, if they have not faith and repentance? How shall they come then?

Answ. Why, he that saith, They *shall come*, shall he not make it good? If they shall come, they shall come; and he that hath said, they shall come, if faith and repentance be the way to come, as indeed they are, then faith and repentance shall be given to them! for *Shall-come* must be fulfilled on them.

1. Faith shall be given them. "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust" (Zeph 3:12; Rom 15:12).

2. They shall have repentance. He is exalted to give repentance. "They shall come weeping, and seeking the Lord their God." And again, "With weeping and supplication will I lead them" (Acts 5:31; Jer 31:9).

I told you before, that an absolute promise hath all conditional ones in the belly of it, and also provision to answer all those qualifications, that they propound to him that seeketh for their benefit. And it must be so; for if *Shall-come* be an absolute promise, as indeed it is, then it must be fulfilled upon every of

those concerned therein. I say, it must be fulfilled, if God can by grace, and his absolute will, fulfil it. Besides, since coming and believing is all one, according to John 6:35, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," then, when he saith they shall come, it is as much as to say, they shall believe, and consequently repent, to the saving of the soul.

So then the present want of faith and repentance cannot make this promise of God of none effect; because that this promise hath in it to give what others call for and expect. I will give them an heart, I will give them my Spirit, I will give them repentance, I will give them faith. Mark these words: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." But how came he to be a "new creature," since none can create but God? Why, God indeed doth make them "new creatures." "Behold," saith he, "I make all things new." And hence it follows, even after he had said they are "new creatures," "and all things are of God;" that is, all this new creation standeth in the several operations, and special workings of the Spirit of grace, who is God (2 Cor 5:17,18).

Object. 7. But how shall they escape all those dangerous and damnable opinions, that, like rocks and quicksands, are in the way in

which they are going?

Answ. Indeed this age is an age of errors, if ever there was an age of errors in the world; but yet the gift of the Father, laid claim to by the Son in the text, must needs escape them, and in conclusion come to him. There are a company of *Shall-comes* in the Bible that doth secure them; not but that they may be assaulted by them; yea, and also for the time entangled and detained by them from the Bishop of their souls, but these *Shall-comes* will break those chains and fetters, that those given to Christ are entangled in, and they *shall come*, because he hath said they shall come to him.

Indeed, errors are like that whore of whom you read in the Proverbs, that sitteth in her seat in the high places of the city, "to call passengers who go right on their ways" (Prov 9:13-16). But the persons, as I said, that by the Father are given to the Son to save them, are, at one time or other, secured by "shall come to me."

And therefore of such it is said, God will guide them with his eye, with his counsels, by his Spirit, and that in the way of peace; by the springs of water, and into all truth (Psa 32:8; 73:24; John 16:13; Luke 1:79; Isa 49:10). So then he that hath such a guide, and all that the

Father giveth to Christ shall have it, he shall escape those dangers, he shall not err in the way; yea, though he be a fool, he shall not err therein, (Isa 35:8), for of every such an one it is said, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa 30:21).

There were thieves and robbers before Christ's coming, as there are also now; but, said he, "The sheep did not hear them." And why did they not hear them, but because they were under the power of *Shall-come*, that absolute promise, that had that grace in itself to bestow upon them, as could make them able rightly to distinguish of voices, "My sheep hear my voice." But how came they to hear it? Why, to them it is given to know and to hear, and that distinguishingly (John 10:8,16; 5:25; Eph 5:14).

Further, The very plain sentence of the text makes provision against all these things; for, saith it, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;" that is, shall not be stopped, or be allured to take up anywhere short of ME, nor shall they turn aside, to abide with any besides ME.

[Import of the words TO ME.]

"Shall come TO ME." —*To me*. By these words there is further insinuated, though not expressed, a double cause of their coming to him. *First*. There is in Christ a fullness of all-sufficiency of that, even of all that which is needful to make us happy. *Second*. Those that indeed come to him, do therefore come to him that they may receive it at his hand.

First. For the first of these, *there is in Christ a fullness of all-sufficiency of all that, even of all that which is needful to make us happy*. Hence it is said, "For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col 1:19). And again, "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). It is also said of him, that his riches are unsearchable —"the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8). Hear what he saith of himself, "Riches and honour *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit *is* better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance. And I will fill their treasures" (Prov 8:18-21).

This in general. But, more particularly,

1. There is that light in Christ, that is

sufficient to lead them out of, and from all that darkness, in the midst of which all others, but them that come to him, stumble, and fall and perish: "I am the light of the world," saith he, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Man by nature is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, for darkness hath blinded his eyes; neither can anything but Jesus Christ lead men out of this darkness. Natural conscience cannot do it; the ten commandments, though in the heart of man, cannot do it. This prerogative belongs only to Jesus Christ.

2. There is that life in Christ, that is to be found nowhere else (John 5:40). Life, as a principle in the soul, by which it shall be acted and enabled to do that which through him is pleasing to God. "He that believeth in," or cometh to, "me," saith he, as the Scripture hath said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Without this life a man is dead, whether he be bad, or whether he be good; that is, good in his own, and other men's esteem. There is no true and eternal life but what is in the ME that speaketh in the text.

There is also life for those that come to him, to be had by faith in his flesh and blood. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John

6:57). And this is a life against that death that comes by the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law, under which all men are, and for ever must be, unless they eat the ME that speaks in the text. "Whoso findeth ME," saith he, "findeth life;" deliverance from that everlasting death and destruction, that, without me, he shall be devoured by (Prov 8:35). Nothing is more desirable than life, to him that hath in himself the sentence of condemnation; and here only is life to be found. This life, to wit, eternal life, this life is in his Son; that is, in him that saith in the text, "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me" (1 John 5:10).

3. The person speaking in the text, is he alone by whom poor sinners have admittance to, and acceptance with the Father, because of the glory of his righteousness, by and in which he presenteth them amiable and spotless in his sight; neither is there any way besides him so to come to the Father: "I am the way," says he, "and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). All other ways to God are dead and damnable; the destroying cherubim stand with flaming swords, turning every way to keep all others from his presence (Gen 3:24). I say, all others but them that come by him. "I am the door; by me," saith he, "if any man enter in, he shall be

saved" (John 10:9).

The person speaking in the text is HE, and only HE, that can give stable and everlasting peace; therefore, saith he, "My peace I give unto you." My peace, which is a peace with God, peace of conscience, and that of an everlasting duration. My peace, peace that cannot be matched, "not as the world giveth, give I unto you;" for the world's peace is but carnal and transitory, but mine is Divine and eternal. Hence it is called the peace of God, and that passeth all understanding.

4. The person speaking in the text hath enough of all things truly spiritually good, to satisfy the desires of every longing soul. "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." And to him that is athirst, "I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely" (John 7:37, Rev 21:6).

5. With the person speaking in the text is power to perfect and defend, and deliver those that come to him for safe-guard. "All power," saith he, "is given unto me in heaven and earth" (Matt 28:18).

Thus might I multiply instances in this nature in abundance. But,

Second. They that in truth do come to him, do therefore come to him that they might receive it at his hand. They come for light,

they come for life, they come for reconciliation with God: they also come for peace, they come that their soul may be satisfied with spiritual good, and that they may be protected by him against all spiritual and eternal damnation; and he alone is able to give them all this, to the filling of their joy to the full, as they also find when they come to him. This is evident,

1. From the plain declaration of those that already are come to him. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:1,2).

2. It is evident also, in that while they keep their eyes upon him, they never desire to change him for another, or to add to themselves some other thing, together with him, to make up their spiritual joy. "God forbid," saith Paul, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of

Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil 3:8,9).

3. It is evident also, by their earnest desires that others might be made partakers of their blessedness. "Brethren," said Paul, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." That is, that way that he expected to be saved himself. As he saith also to the Galatians, "Brethren," saith he, "I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*;" that is, I am a sinner as you are. Now, I beseech you, seek for life, as I am seeking of it; as who should say, For there is a sufficiency in the Lord Jesus both for me and you.

4. It is evident also, by the triumph that such men make over all their enemies, both bodily and ghostly: "Now thanks *be* unto God," said Paul, "which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." And, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ" our Lord? and again, "O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law; but thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 2:14; Rom 8:35; 1 Cor 15:55,56).

5. It is evident also, for that they are made by the glory of that which they have found in him, to suffer and endure what the devil and

hell itself hath or could invent, as a means to separate them from him. Again, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:35-39).

"Shall come TO ME." Oh! the heart-attracting glory that is in Jesus Christ, when he is discovered, to draw those to him that are given to him of the Father; therefore those that came of old, rendered this as the cause of their coming to him: "And we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). And the reason why others come not, but perish in their sins, is for want of a sight of his glory: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should

shine unto them" (2 Cor 4:3,4).

There is therefore heart-pulling glory in Jesus Christ, which, when discovered, draws the man to him; wherefore by *shall come to me*, Christ may mean, when his glory is discovered, then they must come, then they shall come to me. Therefore, as the true comers come with weeping and relenting, as being sensible of their own vileness, so again it is said, that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." That is, at the sight of the glory of that grace that shows itself to them now in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the hopes that they now have of being with him in the heavenly tabernacles. Therefore it saith again, "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace" (Isa 35:10; 51:11; Psa 45:15). There is therefore heart-attracting glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, which, when discovered, subjects the heart to the Word, and makes us come to him.

It is said of Abraham, that when he dwelt in Mesopotamia, "the God of glory appeared unto him," saying, "Get thee out of thy country." And what then? Why, away he went from his

house and friends, and all the world could not stay him. "Now," as the Psalmist says, "Who *is* this King of glory?" he answers, "The Lord, mighty in battle" (Psa 24:8). And who was that, but he that "spoiled principalities and powers," when he did hang upon the tree, triumphing over them thereon? And who was that but Jesus Christ, even the person speaking in the text? Therefore he said of Abraham, "He saw his day. Yea," saith he to the Jews, "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw *it*, and was glad" (Col 2:15; James 2:23; John 8:56).

Indeed, the carnal man says, at least in his heart, "There is no form or comeliness in Christ; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him," (Isa 53:2); but he lies. This he speaks, as having never seen him. But they that stand in his house, and look upon him through the glass of his Word, by the help of his Holy Spirit, they will tell you other things. "But we all," say they, "with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18). They see glory in his person, glory in his undertakings, glory in the merit of his blood, and glory in the perfection of his righteousness; yea, heart-affecting, heart-sweetening, and

heart-changing glory!

Indeed, his glory is veiled, and cannot be seen but as discovered by the Father (Matt 11:27). It is veiled with flesh, with meanness of descent from the flesh, and with that ignominy and shame that attended him in the flesh; but they that can, in God's light, see through these things, they shall see glory in him; yea, such glory as will draw and pull their hearts unto him.

Moses was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter; and for aught I know, had been king at last, had he now conformed to the present vanities that were there at court; but he could not, he would not do it. Why? What was the matter? Why! he saw more in the worst of Christ (bear with the expression), than he saw in the best of all the treasures of the land of Egypt. He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. He forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." But what emboldened him thus to do? Why, "he endured;" for he had a sight of the person speaking in the text. "He endured, as seeing

him who is invisible." But I say, would a sight of Jesus have thus taken away Moses' heart from a crown, and a kingdom, &c., had he not by that sight seen more in him than was to be seen in them? (Heb 11:24-26).

Therefore, when he saith, *shall come to me*, he means, they shall have a discovery of the glory of the grace that is in him; and the beauty and glory of that is of such virtue, that it constraineth, and forceth, with a blessed violency, the hearts of those that are given to him.

Moses, of whom we spake before, was no child when he was thus taken with the beauteous glory of his Lord. He was forty years old, and so consequently was able, being a man of that wisdom and opportunity as he was, to make the best judgment of the things, and of the goodness of them that was before him in the land of Egypt. But he, even he it was, that set that low esteem upon the glory of Egypt, as to count it not worth the meddling with, when he had a sight of this Lord Jesus Christ. This wicked world thinks, that the fancies of a heaven, and a happiness hereafter, may serve well enough to take the heart of such, as either have not the world's good things to delight in; or that are fools, and know not how to delight themselves therein. But let them know again,

that we have had men of all ranks and qualities, that have been taken with the glory of our Lord Jesus, and have left all to follow him. As Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon; and who not, that had either wit or grace, to savour heavenly things? Indeed none can stand off from him, nor any longer hold out against him to whom he reveals the glory of his grace.

[THE PROMISE TO THOSE COMING TO CHRIST.]

"AND HIM THAT COMETH TO ME *I will in no wise cast out*."

By these words our Lord Jesus doth set forth yet more amply the great goodness of his nature towards the coming sinner. Before, he said, They shall come; and here he declareth, That with heart and affections he will receive them. But, by the way, let me speak one word or two to the seeming conditionality of this promise with which now I have to do. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Where it is evident, may some say, that Christ's receiving us to mercy depends upon our coming, and so our salvation by Christ is conditional. If we come, we shall be received; if not, we shall not; for that is fully intimated by the words. The promise of reception is only to

him that cometh. "And him that cometh." I answer, that the coming in these words mentioned, as a condition of being received to life, is that which is promised, yea, concluded to be effected in us by the promise going before. In those latter words, coming to Christ is implicitly required of us; and in the words before, that grace that can make us come is positively promised to us. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" thence. We come to Christ, because it is said, *We shall come*; because it is given to us to *come*. So that the condition which is expressed by Christ in these latter words is absolutely promised in the words before. And, indeed, the coming here intended is nothing else but the effect of "shall come to me. They shall come, and I will not cast them out."

"AND HIM THAT COMETH."

He saith not, and him that is *come*, but him *that cometh*. To speak to these words, *First*, In general. *Second*, More particularly.

[*First*.] In general. They suggest unto us these four things: —

1. That Jesus Christ doth build upon it, *that since the Father gave his people to him, they shall be enabled to come unto him*. "And him that cometh." As who should say, I know

that since they are *given to me*, they shall be enabled to *come unto me*. He saith not, if *they come*, or *I suppose* they will *come*; but, "and him that cometh." By these words, therefore, he shows us that he addresseth himself to the receiving of them whom the Father gave to him to save them. I say, he addresseth himself, or prepareth himself to receive them. By which, as I said, he concludeth or buildeth upon it, that they shall indeed *come* to him. He looketh that the Father should bring them into his bosom, and so stands ready to embrace them.

2. Christ also suggesteth by these words, *that he very well knoweth who are given to him*; not by their coming to him, but by their being given to him. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh," &c. This *him* he knoweth to be one of them that the Father hath given him; and, therefore, he received him, even because the Father hath given *him* to him (John 10). "I know my sheep," saith he. Not only those that already have knowledge of him, but those, too, that yet are ignorant of him. "Other sheep I have," said he, "which are not of this fold," (John 10:16); not of the Jewish church, but those that lie in their sins, even the rude and barbarous Gentiles. Therefore, when Paul was afraid to stay at Corinth, from a supposition that some

mischief might befall him there; "Be not afraid," said the Lord Jesus to him, "but speak, and hold not thy peace - for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9,10). The people that the Lord here speaks of were not at this time accounted his, by reason of a work of conversion that already had passed upon them, but by virtue of the gift of the Father; for he had given them unto him. Therefore was Paul to stay here, to speak the word of the Lord to them, that, by his speaking, the Holy Ghost might effectually work over their souls, to the causing them to come to him, who was also ready, with heart and soul, to receive them.

3. Christ, by these words, also suggesteth, *that no more come unto him than, indeed, are given him of the Father*. For the *him* in this place is one of the *all* that by Christ was mentioned before. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;" and every *him* of that *all*, "I will in no wise cast out." This the apostle insinuateth, where he saith, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of

the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:11-13).

Mark, as in the text, so here he speaketh of *all*. "Until we all come." We all! all who? Doubtless, "All that the Father giveth to Christ." This is further insinuated, because he called this ALL the body of Christ; the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. By which he means the universal number given; to wit, the true elect church, which is said to be his body and fullness (Eph 1:22,23).

4. Christ Jesus, by these words, further suggesteth, *that he is well content with this gift of the Father to him*. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." I will heartily, willingly, and with great content of mind, receive him.

They show us, also, that Christ's love in receiving is as large as his Father's love in giving, and no larger. Hence, he thanks him for his gift, and also thanks him for hiding of him and his things from the rest of the wicked (Matt 11:25; Luke 10:21). But,

Secondly, and more particularly, "And HIM that cometh."

[Import of the word HIM.]

"And him." This word *him*; by it Christ looketh back to the gift of the Father; not only

in the lump and whole of the gift, but to the every *him* of that lump. As who should say, I do not only accept of the gift of my Father in the general, but have a special regard to every of them in particular; and will secure not only some, or the greatest part, but every *him*, every dust. Not a hoof of all shall be lost or left behind. And, indeed, in this he consenteth to his Father's will, which is that of all that he hath given him, he should lose nothing (John 6:39).

"And him." Christ Jesus, also, by his thus dividing the gift of his Father into *hims*, and by his speaking of them in the singular number, shows what a particular work shall be wrought in each one, at the time appointed of the Father. "And it shall come to pass in that day," saith the prophet, "*that* the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." Here are the *hims*, one by one, to be gathered to him by the Father (Isa 27:12).

He shows also hereby that no lineage, kindred, or relation, can at all be profited by any outward or carnal union with the person that the Father hath given to Christ. It is only him, the given HIM, the coming *him*, that he intends absolutely to secure. Men make a great

ado with the children of believers; and oh the children of believers![13] But if the child of the believer is not the *him* concerned in this absolute promise, it is not these men's great cry, nor yet what the parent or child can do, that can interest him in this promise of the Lord Christ, this absolute promise.

AND HIM. There are divers sorts of persons that the Father hath given to Jesus Christ; they are not all of one rank, of one quality; some are high, some are low; some are wise, some fools; some are more civil, and complying with the law; some more profane, and averse to him and his gospel. Now, since those that are given to him are, in some sense, so diverse; and again, since he yet saith, "And him that cometh," &c., he, by that, doth give us to understand that he is not, as men, for picking and choosing, to

[13] "The Scripture contains many gracious promises in behalf of the children of believing parents; but grace is not hereditary. It is the parent's part to pray with and for, admonish, and piously train up his children; but, after all, must recommend them to the tender mercies of God, which the children of many prayers often happily experience." —*Mason*. O that all persons may solemnly consider this searching truth! especially the children of believers. The coming of your father or mother to Christ cannot be imputed to you; come for yourself, or you must perish. As you love your souls, believe not that awful delusion, that any ceremony could make you a child of God. —Ed.

take a best and leave a worst, but he is for *him* that the Father hath given him, and that cometh to him. "He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good," (Lev 27:10); but will take him as he is, and will save his soul.

There is many a sad wretch given by the Father to Jesus Christ; but not one of them all is despised or slighted by him. It is said of those that the Father hath given to Christ that they have done worse than the heathen; that they were murderers, thieves, drunkards, unclean persons, and what not; but he has received them, washed them, and saved them. A fit emblem of this sort is that wretched instance mentioned in the 16th of Ezekiel, that was cast out in a stinking condition, to the loathing of its person, in the days that it was born; a creature in such a wretched condition, that no eye pitied, to do any of the things there mentioned unto it, or to have compassion upon it; no eye but his that speaketh in the text.

AND HIM. Let him be as red as blood, let him be as red as crimson. Some men are blood-red sinners, crimson-sinners, sinners of a double die; dipped and dipped again, before they come to Jesus Christ. Art thou that readest these lines such an one? Speak out,

man! Art thou such an one? and art thou now coming to Jesus Christ for the mercy of justification, that thou mightest be made white in his blood, and be covered with his righteousness? Fear not; forasmuch as this thy coming betokeneth that thou art of the number of them that the Father hath given to Christ; for he will in no wise cast thee out. "Come now," saith Christ, "and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa 1:18).

AND HIM. There was many a strange HIM came to Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh; but he received them all, without turning any away; speaking unto them "of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9:11; 4:40). These words, AND HIM, are therefore words to be wondered at. That not one of them who, by virtue of the Father's gift, and drawing, are coming to Jesus Christ, I say, that not one of them, whatever they have been, whatever they have done, should be rejected or set by, but admitted to a share in his saving grace. It is said in Luke, that the people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (4:22). Now this is one of his gracious words; these words are like drops of honey, as it is said,

"Pleasant words *are as* an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Prov 16:24). These are gracious words indeed, even as full as a faithful and merciful High-priest could speak them. Luther saith, "When Christ speaketh, he hath a mouth as wide as heaven and earth." That is, to speak fully to the encouragement of every sinful *him* that is coming to Jesus Christ. And that his word is certain, hear how himself confirms it: "Heaven and earth," saith he, "shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away" (Isa 51:6; Matt 24:35).

It is also confirmed by the testimony of the four evangelists, who gave faithful relation of his loving reception of all sorts of coming sinners, whether they were publicans, harlots, thieves, possessed of devils, bedlams, and what not (Luke 19:1-10; Matt 21:31; Luke 15; 23:43; Mark 16:9; 5:1-9).

This, then, shows us, 1. "The greatness of the merits of Christ." 2. The willingness of his heart to impute them for life to the great, if coming, sinners.

1. *This shows us the greatness of the merits of Christ*; for it must not be supposed, that his words are bigger than his worthiness. He is strong to execute his word. He can do, as well as speak. He can do exceeding abundantly

more than we ask or think, even to the uttermost, and outside of his word (Eph 3:20). Now, then, since he concludeth any coming HIM; it must be concluded, that he can save to the uttermost sin, any coming HIM.

Do you think, I say, that the Lord Jesus did not think before he spake? He speaks all in righteousness, and therefore by his word we are to judge how mighty he is to save (Isa 63:1). He speaketh in righteousness, in very faithfulness, when he began to build this blessed gospel-fabric, the text; it was for that he had first sat down, and counted the cost; and for that, he knew he was able to finish it! What, Lord, *any him? any him* that cometh to thee? This is a Christ *worth* looking after, this is a Christ *worth coming* to!

This, then, should learn us diligently to consider the natural force of every word of God; and to judge of Christ's ability to save, not by our sins, or by our shallow apprehensions of his grace; but by his word, which is the true measure of grace. And if we do not judge thus, we shall dishonour his grace, lose the benefit of his word, and needlessly fright ourselves into many discouragements though coming to Jesus Christ. *Him, any him* that cometh, hath sufficient from this word of Christ, to feed himself with hopes of salvation. As thou art

therefore coming, O thou coming sinner, judge thou, whether Christ can save thee by the true sense of his words: judge, coming sinner, of the efficacy of his blood, of the perfection of his righteousness, and of the prevalency of his intercession, by his word. "And him," saith he, "that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "In no wise," that is, for no sin. Judge therefore by his word, how able he is to save thee. It is said of God's sayings to the children of Israel, "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Josh 21:45). And again, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you; *and* not one thing hath failed thereof" (Josh 23:14).

Coming sinner, what promise thou findest in the word of Christ, strain it whither thou canst, so thou dost not corrupt it, and his blood and merits will answer all; what the word saith, or any true consequence that is drawn therefrom, that we may boldly venture upon. As here in the text he saith, "And *him* that cometh," indefinitely, without the least intimation of the rejection of any, though never so great, if he be a coming sinner. Take it then for granted, that thou, whoever thou art,

if coming, art intended in these words; neither shall it injure Christ at all, if, as Benhadad's servants served Ahab, thou shalt catch him at his word. "Now," saith the text, "the man did diligently observe whether *anything would come* from him," to wit, any word of grace; "and did hastily catch *it*." And it happened that Ahab had called Benhadad his brother. The man replied, therefore, "Thy brother Benhadad!" (1 Kings 20:33), catching him at his word. Sinner, coming sinner, serve Jesus Christ thus, and he will take it kindly at thy hands. When he in his argument called the Canaanitish woman dog, she catched him at it, and saith, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." I say, she catched him thus in his words, and he took it kindly, saying, "O woman great *is* thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt 15:28). Catch him, coming sinner, catch him in his words, surely he will take it kindly, and will not be offended at thee.

2. The other thing that I told you is showed from these words, is this: *The willingness of Christ's heart to impute his merits for life to the great, if coming sinner*. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

The awakened coming sinner doth not so easily question the power of Christ, as his

willingness to save him. Lord, "if thou wilt, thou canst," said one (Mark 1:40). He did not put the *if* upon his power, but upon his will. He concluded he could, but he was not as fully of persuasion that he would. But we have the same ground to believe he will, as we have to believe he can; and, indeed, ground for both is the Word of God. If he was not willing, why did he promise? Why did he say he would receive the coming sinner? Coming sinner, take notice of this; we use to plead practices with men, and why not with God likewise? I am sure we have no more ground for the one than the other; for we have to plead the promise of a faithful God. Jacob took him there: "Thou saidst," said he, "I will surely do thee good" (Gen 32:12). For, from this promise he concluded, that it followed in reason, "He must be willing."

The text also gives some ground for us to draw the same conclusion. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Here is his willingness asserted, as well as his power suggested. It is worth your observation, that Abraham's faith considered rather God's power than his willingness; that is, he drew his conclusion, "I shall have a child," from the power that was in God to fulfil the promise to him. For he concluded he was willing to give him one, else he would not have promised one.

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform" (Rev 4:20,21). But was not his faith exercised, or tried, about his willingness too? No, there was no show of reason for that, because he had promised it. Indeed, had he not promised it, he might lawfully have doubted it; but since he had promised it, there was left no ground at all for doubting, because his willingness to give a son was demonstrated in his promising him a son. These words, therefore, are sufficient ground to encourage any coming sinner that Christ is willing to his power to receive him; and since he hath power also to do what he will, there is no ground at all left to the coming sinner any more to doubt; but to come in full hope of acceptance, and of being received unto grace and mercy. "And him that cometh." He saith not, and him that is come; but, and him that cometh; that is, and him whose heart begins to move after me, who is leaving all for my sake; *him* who is looking out, who is on his journey to me. We must, therefore, distinguish betwixt coming, and being come to Jesus Christ. He that is come to him has attained of him more sensibly what he felt before that he wanted, than he has that but

yet is coming to him.

[Advantages to the man that is come to Christ.]

A man that is come to Christ hath the advantage of him that is but coming to him; and that in seven things.

1. He that is come to Christ is nearer to him than he that is but coming to him; for he that is but coming to him is yet, in some sense, at a distance from him; as it is said of the coming prodigal, "And while he was yet a great way off" (Luke 15:20). Now he that is nearer to him hath the best sight of him; and so is able to make the best judgment of his wonderful grace and beauty, as God saith, "Let them come near, then let them speak" (Isa 41:1). And as the apostle John saith, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14). He that is not yet come, though he is coming, is not fit, not being indeed capable to make that judgment of the worth and glory of the grace of Christ, as he is that is come to him, and hath seen and beheld it. Therefore, sinner, suspend thy judgment till thou art come nearer.

2. He that is come to Christ has the advantage of him that is but coming, in that he

is eased of his burden; for he that is but coming is not eased of his burden (Matt 11:28). He that is come has cast his burden upon the Lord. By faith he hath seen himself released thereof; but he that is but coming hath it yet, as to sense and feeling, upon his own shoulders. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," implies, that their burden, though they are coming, is yet upon them, and so will be till indeed they are come to him.

3. He that is come to Christ has the advantage of him that is but coming in this also, namely, he hath drank of the sweet and soul refreshing water of life; but he that is but coming hath not. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (John 7:37).

Mark, He must come to him before he drinks: according to that of the prophet, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." He drinketh not as he cometh, but when he is come to the waters (Isa 55:1).

4. He that is come to Christ hath the advantage of him that as yet is but coming in this also, to wit, he is not so terrified with the noise, and, as I may call it, hue and cry, which the avenger of blood makes at the heels of him that yet is but coming to him. When the slayer was on his flight to the city of his refuge, he had the noise or fear of the avenger of blood at

his heels; but when he was come to the city, and was entered thereinto, that noise ceased. Even so it is with him that is but coming to Jesus Christ, he heareth many a dreadful sound in is ear; sounds of death and damnation, which he that is come is at present freed from. Therefore he saith, "Come, and I will give you rest." And so he saith again, "We that have believed, do enter into rest," as he said, &c. (Heb 4).

5. He, therefore, that is come to Christ, is not so subject to those dejections, and castings down, by reason of the rage and assaults of the evil one, as is the man that is but coming to Jesus Christ, though he has temptations too. "And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*" (Luke 9:42). For he has, though Satan still roareth upon him, those experimental comforts and refreshments, to wit, in his treasury, to present himself with, in times of temptation and conflict; which he that is but coming has not.

6. He that is come to Christ has the advantage of him that is but coming to him, in this also, to wit, he hath upon him the wedding garment, &c., but he that is coming has not. The prodigal, when coming home to his father, was clothed with nothing but rags, and was tormented with an empty belly; but when he

was come, the best robe is brought out, also the gold ring, and the shoes, yea, they are put upon him, to his great rejoicing. The fatted calf was killed for him; the music was struck up to make him merry; and thus also the Father himself sang of him, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost and is found" (Luke 15:18,19).

7. In a word, he that is come to Christ, his groans and tears, his doubts and fears, are turned into songs and praises; for that he hath now received the atonement, and the earnest of his inheritance; but he that is but yet a-coming, hath not those praises nor songs of deliverance with him; nor has he as yet received the atonement and earnest of his inheritance, which is, the sealing testimony of the Holy Ghost, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon his conscience, for he is not come (Rom 5:11; Eph 1:13; Heb 12:22-24).

[Import of the word COMETH.]

"And him that COMETH." There is further to be gathered from this word *cometh*, these following particulars: —

1. That Jesus Christ *hath his eye upon, and takes notice of, the first moving of the heart of a sinner after himself*. Coming sinner, thou canst not move with desires after Christ, but

he sees the working of those desires in thy heart. "All my desire," said David, "*is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee" (Psa 38:9). This he spake, as he was coming, after he had backslidden, to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said of the prodigal, that while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, had his eye upon him, and upon the going out of his heart after him (Luke 15:20).

When Nathanael was come to Jesus Christ, the Lord said to them that stood before him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." But Nathanael answered him, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." There, I suppose, Nathanael was pouring out of his soul to God for mercy, or that he would give him good understanding about the Messias to come; and Jesus saw all the workings of his honest heart at that time (John 1:47,48).

Zaccheus also had some secret movings of heart, such as they were, towards Jesus Christ, when he ran before, and climbed up the tree to see him; and the Lord Jesus Christ had his eye upon him: therefore, when he was come to the place, he looked up to him, bids him come down, "For today," said he, "I must abide at thy house;" to wit, in order to the further

completing the work of grace in his soul (Luke 19:1-9). Remember this, coming sinner.

2. As Jesus Christ hath his eye upon, *so he hath his heart open to receive, the coming sinner*. This is verified by the text: "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." This is also discovered by his preparing of the way, in his making of it easy (as may be) to the coming sinner; which preparation is manifest by those blessed words, "I will in no wise cast out;" of which more when we come to the place. And while "he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). All these expressions do strongly prove that the heart of Christ is open to receive the coming sinner.

3. As Jesus Christ has his eye upon, and his heart open to receive, *so he hath resolved already that nothing shall alienate his heart from receiving the coming sinner*. No sins of the coming sinner, nor the length of the time that he hath abode in them, shall by any means prevail with Jesus Christ to reject him. Coming sinner, thou art coming to a loving Lord Jesus!

4. These words therefore are dropped from his blessed mouth, *on purpose that the coming sinner might take encouragement to continue on his journey, until he be come indeed to*

Jesus Christ. It was doubtless a great encouragement to blind Bartimeus, that Jesus Christ stood still and called him, when he was crying, "Jesus, *thou* Son of David, have mercy on me;" therefore, it is said, he cast away his garment, "rose, and came to Jesus" (Mark 10:46). Now, if a call to come hath such encouragement in it, what is a promise of receiving such, but an encouragement much more? And observe it, though he had a call to come, yet not having a promise, his faith was forced to work upon a mere consequence, saying, He calls me; and surely since he calls me, he will grant me my desire. Ah! but coming sinner, thou hast no need to go so far about as to draw (in this matter) consequences, because thou hast plain promises: "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Here is full, plain, yea, what encouragement one can desire; for, suppose thou wast admitted to make a promise thyself, and Christ should attest that he would fulfil it upon the sinner that cometh to him, Couldst thou make a better promise? Couldst thou invent a more full, free, or larger promise? a promise that looks at the first moving of the heart after Jesus Christ? a promise that declares, yea, that engageth Christ Jesus to open his heart to receive the coming sinner? yea, further, a

promise that demonstrateth that the Lord Jesus is resolved freely to receive, and will in no wise cast out, nor means to reject, the soul of the coming sinner! For all this lieth fully in this promise, and doth naturally flow therefrom. Here thou needest not make use of far-fetched consequences, nor strain thy wits, to force encouraging arguments from the text. Coming sinner, the words are plain: "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

[TWO SORTS OF SINNERS COMING TO CHRIST.]

"And him that COMETH." There are two sorts of sinners that are coming to Jesus Christ. *First*, Him that hath never, while of late,[14] at all began to come. *Second*, Him that came formerly, and after that went back; but hath since bethought himself, and is now coming again. Both these sorts of sinners are intended by the HIM in the text, as is evident; because both are now the coming sinners. "And him that cometh."

First. [The newly-awakened comer.] —For the first of these: the sinner that hath never, while of late, began to come, his way is more easy; I do not say, more plain and open to come

[14] "While of late;" until of late. —Ed.

to Christ than is the other —those last not having the clog of a guilty conscience, for the sin of backsliding, hanging at their heels. But all the encouragement of the gospel, with what invitations are therein contained to coming sinners, are as free and as open to the one as to the other; so that they may with the same freedom and liberty, as from the Word, both alike claim interest in the promise. "All things are ready;" all things for the coming backsliders, as well as for the others: "Come to the wedding." "And let him that is athirst come" (Matt 22:1-4; Rev 22:17).

Second. [The returning backslider.] —But having spoke to the first of these already, I shall here pass it by; and shall speak a word or two to him that is coming, after backsliding, to Jesus Christ for life. Thy way, O thou sinner of a double dye, thy way is open to come to Jesus Christ. I mean thee, whose heart, after long backsliding, doth think of turning to him again. Thy way, I say, is open to him, as is the way of the other sorts of comers; as appears by what follows: —

1. Because the text makes no exception against thee. It doth not say, And any *him* but a backslider, any *him* but him. The text doth not thus object, but indefinitely openeth wide its golden arms to every coming soul, without the

least exception; therefore thou mayest come. And take heed that thou shut not that door against thy soul by unbelief, which God has opened by his grace.

2. Nay, the text is so far from excepting against thy coming, that it strongly suggesteth that thou art one of the souls intended, O thou coming backslider; else what need that clause have been so inserted, "I will in no wise cast out?" As who should say, Though those that come now are such as have formerly backslidden, I will in "no wise" cast away the fornicator, the covetous, the railer, the drunkard, or other common sinners, nor yet the backslider neither.

3. That the backslider is intended is evident,

(1.) For that he is sent to by name, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter" (Mark 16:7). But Peter was a godly man. True, but he was also a backslider, yea, a desperate backslider: he had denied his Master once, twice, thrice, cursing and swearing that he knew him not. If this was not backsliding, if this was not an high and eminent backsliding, yea, a higher backsliding than thou art capable of, I have thought amiss.

Again, when David had backslidden, and had committed adultery and murder in his backsliding, he must be sent to by name:

"And," saith the text, "the Lord sent Nathan unto David." And he sent him to tell him, after he had brought him to unfeigned acknowledgment, "The Lord hath also put away, or forgiven thy sin" (2 Sam 12:1,13).

This man also was far gone: he took a man's wife, and killed her husband, and endeavoured to cover all with wicked dissimulation. He did this, I say, after God had exalted him, and showed him great favour; wherefore his transgression was greatened also by the prophet with mighty aggravations; yet he was accepted, and that with gladness, at the first step he took in his returning to Christ. For the first step of the backslider's return is to say, sensibly and unfeignedly, "I have sinned;" but he had no sooner said thus, but a pardon was produced, yea, thrust into his bosom: "And Nathan said unto David, The Lord hath also put away thy sin."

(2.) As the person of the backslider is mentioned by name, so also is his sin, that, if possible, thy objections against thy returning to Christ may be taken out of thy way; I say, thy sin also is mentioned by name, and mixed, as mentioned, with words of grace and favour: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely" (Hosea 14:4). What sayest thou now, backslider?

(3.) Nay, further, thou art not only mentioned by name, and thy sin by the nature of it, but thou thyself, who art a returning backslider, put, (a) Amongst God's Israel, "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; *and* I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I *am* merciful, saith the Lord, *and* I will not keep *anger* for ever" (Jer 3:12). (b) Thou art put among his children; among his children to whom he is married. "Turn, O backsliding children, for I am married unto you" (verse 14). (c) Yea, after all this, as if his heart was so full of grace for them, that he was pressed until he had uttered it before them, he adds, "Return, ye backsliding children, *and* I will heal your backslidings" (verse 22).

(4.) Nay, further, the Lord hath considered, that the shame of thy sin hath stopped thy mouth, and made thee almost a prayerless man; and therefore he saith unto thee, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously." See his grace, that himself should put words of encouragement into the heart of a backslider; as he saith in another place, "I taught Ephraim to go, taking him by the arms." This is teaching him to go indeed, to hold him up by the arms; by the chin, as we say (Hosea 14:2; 11:3).

From what has been said, I conclude, even as I said before, that the *him* in the text, and *him that cometh*, includeth both these sorts of sinners, and therefore both should freely come.

Quest. 1. But where doth Jesus Christ, in all the word of the New Testament, expressly speak to a returning backslider with words of grace and peace? For what you have urged as yet, from the New Testament, is nothing but consequences drawn from this text. Indeed it is a full text for carnal ignorant sinners that come, but to me, who am a backslider, it yieldeth but little relief.

Answ. How! but little encouragement from the text, when it is said, "I will in now wise cast out"! What more could have been said? What is here omitted that might have been inserted, to make the promise more full and free? Nay, take all the promises in the Bible, all the freest promises, with all the variety of expressions of what nature or extent soever, and they can but amount to the expressions of this very promise, "I will in no wise cast out;" I will for nothing, by no means, upon no account, however they have sinned, however they have backslidden, however they have provoked, cast out the coming sinner. But,

Quest. 2. Thou sayest, Where doth Jesus Christ, in all the words of the New Testament,

speak to a returning backslider with words of grace and peace, that is under the name of a backslider?

Answ. Where there is such plenty of examples in receiving backsliders, there is the less need for express words to that intent; one promise, as the text is, with those examples that are annexed, are instead of many promises. And besides, I reckon that the act of receiving is of as much, if not of more encouragement, than is a bare promise to receive; for receiving is as the promise, and the fulfilling of it too; so that in the Old Testament thou hast the promise, and in the New, the fulfilling of it; and that in divers examples.

1. In Peter. Peter denied his master, once, twice, thrice, and that with open oath; yet Christ receives him again without any the least hesitation or stick. Yea, he slips, stumbles, falls again, in downright dissimulation, and that to the hurt and fall of many others; but neither of this doth Christ make a bar to his salvation, but receives him again at his return, as if he knew nothing of the fault (Gal 2).

2. The rest of the disciples, even all of them, did backslide and leave the Lord Jesus in his greatest straits. "Then all the disciples forsook him and fled," (Matt 26:56), they returned, as he had foretold, every one to his own, and left

him alone; but this also he passes over as a very light matter. Not that it was so indeed in itself, but the abundance of grace that was in him did lightly roll it away; for after his resurrection, when first he appeared unto them, he gives them not the least check for their perfidious dealings with him, but salutes them with words of grace, saying, "All hail! be not afraid, peace be to you; all power in heaven and earth is given unto me." True, he rebuked them for their unbelief, for the which also thou deservest the same. For it is unbelief that alone puts Christ and his benefits from us (John 16:52; Matt 28:9-11; Luke 24:39; Mark 16:14).

3. The man that after a large profession lay with his father's wife, committed a high transgression, even such a one that at that day was not heard of, no, not among the Gentiles. Wherefore this was a desperate backsliding; yet, at his return, he was received, and accepted again to mercy (1 Cor 5:1,2; 2 Cor 2:6-8).

4. The thief that stole was bid to steal no more; not at all doubting but that Christ was ready to forgive him this act of backsliding (Eph 4:28).

Now all these are examples, particular instances of Christ's readiness to receive the backsliders to mercy; and, observe it, examples and proofs that he hath done so are, to our

unbelieving hearts, stronger encouragements than bare promises that so he will do.

But again, the Lord Jesus hath added to these, for the encouragement of returning backsliders, to come to him. (1.) A call to come, and he will receive them (Rev 2:1-5; 14-16; 20-22; 3:1-3; 15-22). Wherefore New Testament backsliders have encouragement to come. (2.) A declaration of readiness to receive them that come, as here in the text, and in many other places, is plain. Therefore, "Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps," of the golden grace of the gospel, "set thine heart toward the highway, *even* the way *which* thou wentest." When thou didst backslide; "turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities" (Jer 31:21).

"And him that *cometh*." He saith not, and him that talketh, that professeth, that maketh a show, a noise, or the like; but, him that *cometh*. Christ will take leave to judge, who, among the many that make a noise, they be that indeed are coming to him. It is not him that saith he comes, nor him of whom others affirm that he comes; but him that Christ himself shall say doth come, that is concerned in this text. When the woman that had the bloody issue came to him for cure, there were others as well as she, that made a great bustle

about him, that touched, yea, thronged him. Ah, but Christ could distinguish this woman from them all; "And he looked round about" upon them all, "to see her that had done this thing" (Mark 5:25-32). He was not concerned with the thronging, or touchings of the rest; for theirs were but accidental, or at best, void of that which made her touch acceptable. Wherefore Christ must be judge who they be that in truth are coming to him; Every man's ways are right in his own eyes, "but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Prov 16:2). It standeth therefore every one in hand to be certain of their coming to Jesus Christ; for as thy coming is, so shall thy salvation be. If thou comest indeed, thy salvation shall be indeed; but if thou comest but in outward appearance, so shall thy salvation be; but of coming, see before, as also afterwards, in the use and application.

"And him that cometh TO ME." These words *to me* are also well to be heeded; for by them, as he secureth those that come to him, so also he shows himself unconcerned with those that in their coming rest short, to turn aside to others; for you must know, that every one that comes, comes not to Jesus Christ; some that come, come to Moses, and to his law, and there take up for life; with these Christ is not concerned; with these his promise hath not

to do. “Christ is become of no effect unto you; whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace” (Gal 5:4). Again, some that came, came no further than to gospel ordinances, and there stay; they came not through them to Christ; with these neither is he concerned; nor will their “Lord, Lord,” avail them anything in the great and dismal day. A man may come to, and also go from the place and ordinances of worship, and yet not be remembered by Christ. “So I saw the wicked buried,” said Solomon, “who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done; this *is* also vanity” (Eccl 8:10).

“TO ME.” These words, therefore, are by Jesus Christ very warily put in, and serve for caution and encouragement; for caution, lest we take up in our coming anywhere short of Christ; and for encouragement to those that shall in their coming, come past all; till they come to Jesus Christ. “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Reader, if thou lovest thy soul, take this caution kindly at the hands of Jesus Christ. Thou seest thy sickness, thy wound, thy necessity of salvation. Well, go not to king Jareb, for he cannot heal thee, nor cure thee of thy wound (Hosea 5:13). Take the caution, I

say, lest Christ, instead of being a Saviour unto thee, becomes a lion, a young lion, to tear thee, and go away (Hosea 5:14).

There is a coming, but not to the Most High; there is a coming, but not with the whole heart, but as it were feignedly; therefore take the caution kindly (Jer 3:10; Hosea 7:16).

"And him that cometh TO ME;" Christ as a Saviour will stand alone, because his own arm alone hath brought salvation unto him. He will not be joined with Moses, nor suffer John Baptist to be tabernacled by him. I say they must vanish, for Christ will stand alone (Luke 9:28-36). Yea, God the Father will have it so; therefore they must be parted from him, and a voice from heaven must come to bid the disciples hear only the beloved Son. Christ will not suffer any law, ordinance, statute, or judgment, to be partners with him in the salvation of the sinner. Nay, he saith not, and him that cometh to my WORD; but, and him that cometh to ME. The words of Christ, even his most blessed and free promises, such as this in the text, are not the Saviour of the world; for that is Christ himself, Christ himself only. The promises, therefore, are but to encourage the coming sinner to come to Jesus Christ, and not to rest in them, short of salvation by him. "And him that cometh TO

ME." The man, therefore, that comes aright, casts all things behind his back, and looketh at, nor hath his expectations from ought, but the Son of God alone; as David said, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him. He only *is* my rock, and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved" (Psa 62:5,6). His eye is to Christ, his heart is to Christ, and his expectation is from him, from him only.

Therefore the man that comes to Christ, is one that hath had deep considerations of his own sins, slighting thoughts of his own righteousness, and high thoughts of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; yea, he sees, as I have said, more virtue in the blood of Christ to save him, than there is in all his sins to damn him. He therefore setteth Christ before his eyes; there is nothing in heaven or earth, he knows, that can save his soul and secure him from the wrath of God, but Christ; that is, nothing but his personal righteousness and blood.

[Import of the words IN NO WISE.]

"And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." IN NO WISE: by these words there is [*First*,] Something *expressed*; and [*Second*,] Something *implied*.

First, That which is expressed is Christ Jesus, his unchangeable resolution to save the coming sinner; I will in no wise reject him, or deny him the benefit of my death and righteousness. This word, therefore, is like that which he speaks of the everlasting damnation of the sinner in hell-fire; "He shall by no means depart thence;" that is, never, never come out again, no, not to all eternity (Matt 5:26; 25:46). So that as he that is condemned into hell-fire hath no ground of hope for his deliverance thence; so him that cometh to Christ, hath no ground to fear he shall ever be cast in thither.

"Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord" (Jer 31:37). "Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant *be* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob" (Jer 33:25,26). But heaven cannot be measured, nor the foundations of the earth searched out beneath; his covenant is also with day and night, and he hath appointed the ordinances of heaven; therefore he will not cast away the seed of Jacob, who are the coming ones, but will certainly save them from the

dreadful wrath to come (Jer 50:4,5). By this, therefore, it is manifest, that it was not the greatness of sin, nor the long continuance in it, no, nor yet the backsliding, nor the pollution of thy nature, that can put a bar in against, or be an hindrance of, the salvation of the coming sinner. For, if indeed this could be, then would this solemn and absolute determination of the Lord Jesus, of itself, fall to the ground, and be made of none effect. But his "counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure;" that is, his pleasure in this; for his promise, as to this irreversible conclusion, ariseth of his pleasure; he will stand to it, and will fulfil it, because it is his pleasure (Isa 46:10,11).

Suppose that one man had the sins, or as many sins as an hundred, and another should have an hundred times as many as he; yet, if they come, this word, "I will in no wise cast out," secures them both alike.

Suppose a man hath a desire to be saved, and for that purpose is coming in truth to Jesus Christ; but he, by his debauched life, has damned many in hell; why, the door of hope is by these words set as open for him, as it is for him that hath not the thousandth part of his transgressions. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Suppose a man is coming to Christ to be

saved, and hath nothing but sin, and an ill-spent life, to bring with him; why, let him come, and welcome to Jesus Christ, "And he will in no wise cast him out" (Luke 7:42). Is not this love that passeth knowledge? Is not this love the wonderment of angels? And is not this love worthy of all acceptation at the hands and hearts of all coming sinners?

[Hindrances in coming to Christ.]

Second, That which is implied in the words is, 1. The coming souls have those that continually lie at Jesus Christ[15] to cast them off. 2. The coming souls are afraid that those will prevail with Christ to cast them off. For these words are spoken to satisfy us, and to stay up our spirits against these two dangers: "I will in no wise cast out."

1. For the *first, Coming souls have those that continually lie at Jesus Christ to cast them off*. And there are three things that thus bend themselves against the coming sinner.

(1.) There is the devil, that accuser of the brethren, that accuses them before God, day and night (Rev 12:10). This prince of darkness is unwearied in this work; he doth it, as you

[15] "Lie at Jesus Christ;" to lay down, lie at the feet of Jesus Christ, to persevere like the Syrophenician woman, Mark 7:25. —Ed.

see, day and night; that is, without ceasing. He continually puts in his caveats against thee, if so be he may prevail. How did he ply[16] it against that good man Job, if possibly he might have obtained his destruction in hell-fire? He objected against him, that he served not God for nought, and tempted God to put forth his hand against him, urging, that if he did it, he would curse him to his face; and all this, as God witnesseth, "he did without a cause" (Job 1:9-11; 2:4,5). How did he ply it with Christ against Joshua the high-priest? "And he showed me Joshua," said the prophet, "the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" (Zech 3:1).

To resist him; that is, to prevail with the Lord Jesus Christ to resist him; objecting the uncleanness and unlawful marriage of his sons with the Gentiles; for that was the crime that Satan laid against them (Ezra 10:18). Yea, and for aught I know, Joshua was also guilty of the fact; but if not of that, of crimes no whit inferior; for he was clothed with filthy garments, as he stood before the angel. Neither had he one word to say in vindication of himself, against all that this wicked one had to

[16] "Ply;" to solicit importunately. —Ed.

say against him. But notwithstanding that, he came off well; but he might for it thank a good Lord Jesus, because he did not resist him, but contrariwise, took up his cause, pleaded against the devil, excusing his infirmity, and put justifying robes upon him before his adversary's face.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. *Is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire? And he answered and spoke to those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him; and unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (Zech 3:2-4).

Again, how did Satan ply it against Peter, when he desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat? that is, if possible, sever all grace from his heart, and leave him nothing but flesh and filth, to the end that he might make the Lord Jesus loathe and abhor him. "Simon, Simon," said Christ, "Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat." But did he prevail against him? No: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." As who should say, Simon, Satan hath desired me that I would give thee up to him,

and not only thee, but all the rest of thy brethren —for that the word *you* imports —but I will not leave thee in his hand: I have prayed for thee, thy faith shall not fail; I will secure thee to the heavenly inheritance (Luke 22:30-32).

(2.) As Satan, so every sin of the coming sinner, comes in with a voice against him, if perhaps they may prevail with Christ to cast off the soul. When Israel was coming out of Egypt to Canaan, how many times had their sins thrown them out of the mercy of God, had not Moses, as a type of Christ, stood in the breach to turn away his wrath from them! (Psa 106:23). Our iniquities testify against us, and would certainly prevail against us, to our utter rejection and damnation, had we not an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1,2).

The sins of the old world cried them down to hell; the sins of Sodom fetched upon them fire from heaven, which devoured them; the sins of the Egyptians cried them down to hell, because they came not to Jesus Christ for life. Coming sinner, thy sins are no whit less than any; nay, perhaps, they are as big as all theirs. Why is it then, that thou livest when they are dead, and that thou hast a promise of pardon when they had not? “Why, thou art coming to

Jesus Christ;" and therefore sin shall not be thy ruin.

(3.) As Satan and sin, so the law of Moses, as it is a perfect holy law, hath a voice against you before the face of God. "There is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses," his law (John 5:45). Yea, it accuseth all men of transgression that have sinned against it; for as long as sin is sin, there will be a law to accuse for sin. But this accusation shall not prevail against the coming sinner; because it is Christ that died, and that ever lives, to make intercession for them that "come to God by him" (Rom 8; Heb 7:25).

These things, I say, do accuse us before Christ Jesus; yea, and also to our own faces, if perhaps they might prevail against us. But these words, "I will in no wise cast out," secureth the coming sinner from them all.

The coming sinner is not saved, because there is none that comes in against him; but because the Lord Jesus will not hear their accusations, will not cast out the coming sinner. When Shimei came down to meet king David, and to ask for pardon for his rebellion, up starts Abishai, and puts in his caveat, saying, Shall not Shimei die for this? This is the case of him that comes to Christ. He hath this Abishai, and that Abishai, that presently steps in against him, saying, Shall not this rebel's

sins destroy him in hell? Read further. But David answered, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel, for do not I know, that I *am* king this day over Israel?" (2 Sam 19:16-22). That is Christ's answer by the text, to all that accuse the coming Shimeis. What have I to do with you, that accuse the coming sinners to me? I count you adversaries, that are against my showing mercy to them. Do not I know that I am exalted this day to be king of righteousness, and king of peace? "I will in no wise cast them out."

2. But again, these words do closely imply, *that the coming souls are afraid that these accusers will prevail against them*, as is evident, because the text is spoken for their relief and succour. For that need not be, if they that are coming were not subject to fear and despond upon this account. Alas, there is guilt, and the curse lies upon the conscience of the coming sinner!

Besides, he is conscious to himself what a villain, what a wretch he hath been against God and Christ. Also he now knows, by woeful experience, how he hath been at Satan's beck, and at the motion of every lust. He hath now also new thoughts of the holiness and justice

of God. Also he feels, that he cannot forbear sinning against him. For the motions of sins, which are by the law, doth still work in his members, to bring forth fruit unto death (Rom 7:5). But none of this needs be [a discouragement] since we have so good, so tender-hearted, and so faithful a Jesus to come to, who will rather overthrow heaven and earth, than suffer a tittle of this text to fail. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

[Import of the words TO CAST OUT.]

Now, we have yet to inquire into two things that lie in the words, to which there hath yet been nothing said. As, FIRST, What it is to cast out. SECOND, How it appears that Christ hath power to save or cast out?

[WHAT IT IS TO CAST OUT.]

FIRST. For the first of these, *What it is to cast out*. To this I will speak, *First*, Generally. *Second*, More particularly.

[First, Generally.]

1. To cast out, is to slight and despise, and contemn; as it is said of Saul's shield, "it was vilely cast away," (2 Sam 1:21), that is, slighted and contemned. Thus it is with the sinners that come not to Jesus Christ. He slights, despises, and contemns them; that is, "casts them away."

2. Things cast away are reputed as menstruous cloths, and as the dirt of the street (Isa 3:24; Psa 18:42; Matt 5:13; 15:17). And thus it shall be with the men that come not to Jesus Christ, they shall be counted as menstruous, and as the dirt in the streets.

3. To be cast out, or off, it is to be abhorred, not to be pitied; but to be put to perpetual shame (Psa 44:9; 89:38; Amos 1:11). But,

Second, More particularly, to come to the text. The casting out here mentioned is not limited to this or the other evil: therefore it must be extended to the most extreme and utmost misery. Or thus: He that cometh to Christ shall not want anything that may make him gospelly-happy in this world, or that which is to come; nor shall he want anything that cometh not, that may make him spiritually and eternally miserable. But further, As it is to be generally taken [as respecteth the things that are *now*], so it respecteth things that shall be *hereafter*.

I. *For the things that are now*, they are either, 1. More general: Or, 2. More particular.

1. More general, thus:

(1.) It is "to be cast out" of the presence and favour of God. Thus was Cain cast out: "Thou has driven," *or cast* "me out this day; from thy face," *that is, from thy favour* "shall I

be hid." A dreadful complaint! But the effect of a more dreadful judgment! (Gen 4:14; Jer 23:39; 1 Chron 28:9).

(2.) "To be cast out," is to be cast out of God's sight. God will look after them no more, care for them no more; nor will he watch over them any more for good (2 Kings 17:20; Jer 7:15). Now they that are so, are left like blind men, to wander and fall into the pit of hell. This, therefore, is also a sad judgment! therefore here is the mercy of him that *cometh* to Christ. He shall not be left to wander at uncertainties. The Lord Jesus Christ will keep him, as a shepherd doth his sheep (Psa 23). "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

(3.) "To be cast out," is to be denied a place in God's house, and to be left as fugitives and vagabonds, to pass a little time away in this miserable life, and after that to go down to the dead (Gal 4:30; Gen 4:13,14; 21:10). Therefore here is the benefit of him that cometh to Christ, he shall not be denied a place in God's house. They shall not be left like vagabonds in the world. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." See Proverbs 14:26, Isaiah 56:3-5, Ephesians 1:1922, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.

(4.) In a word, "To be cast out," is to be

rejected as are the fallen angels. For their eternal damnation began at their being cast down from heaven to hell. So then, not to be cast out, is to have a place, a house, and habitation there; and to have a share in the privileges of elect angels.

These words, therefore, "I will not cast out," will prove great words one day to them that come to Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:4; John 20:31; Luke 20:35).

2. Second, and more particularly,

(1.) Christ hath everlasting life for him that cometh to him, and he shall never perish; "For he will in no wise cast him out;" but for the rest, they are rejected, "cast out," and must be damned (John 10:27,28).

(2.) Christ hath everlasting righteousness to clothe them with that come to him, and they shall be covered with it as with a garment, but the rest shall be found in the filthy rags of their own stinking pollutions, and shall be wrapt up in them, as in a winding-sheet, and so bear their shame before the Lord, and also before the angels (Dan 9:27; Isa 57:20; Rev 3:4-18, 15, 16).

(3.) Christ hath precious blood, that, like an open fountain, stands free for him to wash in, that comes to him for life; "And he will in no wise cast him out;" but they that come not

to him are rejected from a share therein, and are left to ireful vengeance for their sins (Zech 13:1; 1 Peter 1:18,19; John 13:8; 3:16).

(4.) Christ hath precious promises, and they shall have a share in them that come to him for life; for "he will in no wise cast them out." But they that come not can have no share in them, because they are true only in him; for in him, and only in him, all the promises are yea and amen. Wherefore they that come not to him, are no whit the better for them (Psa 50:16; 2 Cor 1:20,21).

(5.) Christ hath also fullness of grace in himself for them that come to him for life: "And he will in no wise cast them out." But those that come not unto him are left in their graceless state; and as Christ leaves them, death, hell, and judgment finds them. "Whoso findeth me," saith Christ, "findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov 8:35,36).

(6.) Christ is an Intercessor, and ever liveth to make intercession for them that come to God by him: "But their sorrows shall be multiplied, *that* hasten *after* another," or other gods, their sins and lusts. "Their drink-offerings will I not offer, nor take up their names into his lips" (Psa 16:4; Heb 7:25).

(7.) Christ hath wonderful love, bowels, and compassions, for those that come to him; for "he will in no wise cast them out." But the rest will find him a lion rampant; he will one day tear them all to pieces. "Now consider this," saith he, "ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver" (Psa 50:22).

(8.) Christ is one by and for whose sake those that come to him have their persons and performances accepted of the Father: "And he will in no wise cast them out;" but the rest must fly to the rocks and mountains for shelter, but all in vain, to hide them from his face and wrath (Rev 6:15-17).

II. But again, These words, CAST OUT, *have a special look to what will be hereafter, even at the day of judgment*. For then, and not till then, will be the great *anathema* and *casting out* made manifest, even manifest by execution. Therefore here to speak to this, and that under these two heads. As, First, *Of the casting out itself*. Second, *Of the place into which they shall be cast*, that shall then be cast out.

First, *The casting out itself* standeth in two things. 1. In a preparatory work. 2. In the manner of executing the act.

1. The preparatory work standeth in these

three things.

(1.) It standeth in their separation that have not come to him, from them that have, at that day. Or thus: At the day of the great *casting out*, those that have not NOW come to him, shall be separated from them that have; for them that have "he will not cast out." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt 25:31,32). This dreadful separation, therefore, shall then be made betwixt them that NOW come to Christ, and them that come not. And good reason; for since they would not with us come to him *now* they have time, why should they stand with us when judgment is come?

(2.) They shall be placed before him according to their condition: they that have come to him, in great dignity, even at his right hand; "For he will in no wise cast them out": but the rest shall be set at his left hand, the place of disgrace and shame; for they did not come to him for life. Distinguished also shall they be by fit terms: these that come to him he calleth the sheep, but the rest are frowish goats, "and he shall separate them one from another,

as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;" and the sheep will be set on the right hand —next heaven gate, for they came to him —but the goats on his left, to go from him into hell, because they are not of his sheep.

(3.) Then will Christ proceed to conviction of those that came not to him, and will say, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in," or did not come unto me. Their excuse of themselves he will slight as dirt, and proceed to their final judgment.

2. Now when these wretched rejecters of Christ shall thus be set before him in their sins, and convicted, this is the preparatory work upon which follows the manner of executing the act which will be done.

(1.) In the presence of all the holy angels.

(2.) In the presence of all them that in their lifetime came to him, by saying unto them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels": with the reason annexed to it. For you were cruel to me and mine, particularly discovered in these words, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matt 25:41-43).

Second, Now it remains that we speak *of*

the place into which these shall be cast, which, in the general, you have heard already, to wit, the first prepared for the devil and his angels. But, in particular, it is thus described: —

1. It is called *Tophet*: "For Tophet *is* ordained of old, yea, for the king," the Lucifer, "it is prepared; he hath made *it* deep *and* large; the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa 30:32).

2. It is called *hell*. "It is better for thee to enter halt" or lame "into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell" (Mark 9:45).

3. It is called *the wine-press of the wrath of God*. "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth," that is, them that did not come to Christ, "and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God" (Rev 14:19).

4. It is called *a lake of fire*. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15).

5. It is called *a pit*. "Thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit" (Isa 14:13-15).

6. It is called *a bottomless pit, out of which the smoke and the locust came, and into which the great dragon was cast*; and it is called *bottomless*, to show the endlessness of the fall that they will have into it, that come not, in the acceptable time, to Jesus Christ (Rev 9:1,2; 20:3).

7. It is called *outer darkness*. "Bind him hand and foot - and cast *him* into outer darkness," "and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness," "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 22:13; 25:30).

8. It is called *a furnace of fire*. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And again, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 13:40-51).

9. Lastly, It may not be amiss, if, in the conclusion of this, I show in few words to what the things that torment them in this state are

compared. Indeed, some of them have been occasionally mentioned already; as that they are compared,

(1.) To wood that burneth.

(2.) To fire.

(3.) To fire and brimstone: But,

(4.) It is compared to a worm, a gnawing worm, a never-dying gnawing worm; They are cast into hell, "where their worm dieth not" (Mark 9:44).

(5.) It is called *unquenchable fire*; "He will gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt 3:12; Luke 3:17).

(6.) It is called *everlasting destruction*; "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess 1:7-9).

(7.) It is called *wrath without mixture*, and is given them in the cup of his indignation. "If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be

tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev 14:9,10).

(8.) It is called *the second death*. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (Rev 20:6,14).

(9.) It is called *eternal damnation*. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." Oh! these three words! *Everlasting punishment! Eternal damnation*! And *For ever and ever*! How will they gnaw and eat up all the expectation of the end of the misery of the cast-away sinners. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night," &c., (Rev 14:11).

Their behaviour in hell is set forth by four things as I know of; —(a.) By calling for help and relief in vain; (b.) By weeping; (c.) By wailing; (d.) By gnashing of teeth.

[THE POWER OF CHRIST TO SAVE, OR TO CAST OUT.]

SECOND. And now we come to the second thing that is to be inquired into, namely, *How it appears that Christ hath power to save, or to*

cast out. For by these words, "I will in no wise cast out," he declareth that he hath power to do both. Now this inquiry admits us to search into the things: *First*, How it appears *that he hath power to save; Second*, How it appears *that he hath power to cast out*.

First, That he hath power to save, appears by that which follows: —

1. To speak only of him as he is mediator: he was authorized to this blessed work by his Father, before the world began. Hence the apostle saith, "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). With all those things that effectually will produce our salvation. Read the same chapter, with 2 Timothy 1:9.

2. He was promised to our first parents, that he should, in the fullness of time, bruise the serpent's head; and, as Paul expounds it, redeem them that were under the law. Hence, since that time, he hath been reckoned as slain for our sins. By which means all the fathers under the first testament were secured from the wrath to come; hence he is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8; Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4,5).

3. Moses gave testimony of him by the types and shadows, and bloody sacrifices, that he commanded from the mouth of God to be in

use for the support of his people's faith, until the time of reformation; which was the time of this Jesus his death (Heb 9, 10).

4. At the time of his birth it was testified of him by the angel, "That he should save his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21).

5. It is testified of him in the days of his flesh, that he had power on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-12).

6. It is testified also of him by the apostle Peter, that "God hath exalted him with his own right hand, *to be* a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

7. In a word, this is everywhere testified of him, both in the Old Testament and the New. And good reason that he should be acknowledged and trusted in, as a Saviour.

(1.) He came down from heaven to be a Saviour (John 6:38-40).

(2.) He was anointed when on earth to be a Saviour (Luke 3:22).

(3.) He did the works of a Saviour. As, (a.) He fulfilled the law, and became the end of it for righteousness, for them that believe in him (Rom 10:3,4). (b.) He laid down his life as a Saviour; he gave his life as "a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim 2:6). (c.) He hath abolished death, destroyed the devil,

put away sin, got the keys of hell and death, is ascended into heaven; is there accepted of God, and bid sit at the right hand as a Saviour; and that because his sacrifice for sins pleased God (2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14,15; 10:12,13; Eph 4:7,8; John 16:10,11; Acts 5:30,31).

(4.) God hath sent out and proclaimed him as a Saviour, and tells the world that we have redemption through his blood, that he will justify us, if we believe in his blood, and that he can faithfully and justly do it. Yea, God doth beseech us to be reconciled to him by his Son; which could not be, if he were not anointed by him to this very end, and also if his works and undertakings were not accepted of him considered as a Saviour (Rom 3:24,25; 2 Cor 5:18-21).

(5.) God hath received already millions of souls into his paradise, because they have received this Jesus for a Saviour; and is resolved to cut them off, and to cast them out of his presence, that will not take him for a Saviour (Heb 12:22-26).

I intend brevity here; therefore a word to the second, and so conclude.

Second, How it appears *that he hath power to cast out*. This appears also by what follows: —

1. The Father, for the service that he hath

done him as Saviour, hath made him Lord of all, even Lord of quick and dead. “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom 14:9).

2. The Father hath left it with him to quicken whom he will, to wit, with saving grace, and to cast out whom he will, for their rebellion against him (John 5:21).

3. The Father hath made him judge of quick and dead, hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and appointed that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (John 5:22,23).

4. God will judge the world by this man: the day is appointed for judgment, and he is appointed for judge. “He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man” (Acts 17:31). Therefore we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive for the things done in the body, according to what they have done. If they have closed with him, heaven and salvation; if they have not, hell and damnation!And for these reasons he must be judge: —

(1.) Because of his humiliation, because of his Father’s word he humbled himself, and he became obedient unto death, even the death of

the cross. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This hath respect to his being judge, and his sitting in judgment upon angels and men (Phil 2:7-11; Rom 14:10,11).

(2.) That all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:22,23).

(3.) Because of his righteous judgment, this work is fit for no creature; it is only fit for the Son of God. For he will reward every man according to his ways (Rev 22:12).

(4.) Because he is the Son of man. He “hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:27).

[SECOND, THE TEXT TREATED BY WAY OF OBSERVATION.]

Thus have I in brief passed through this

text by way of explications. My next work is to speak to it by way of observation. But I shall be also as brief in that as the nature of the thing will admit. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

And now I come to some observations, and a little briefly to speak to them, and then conclude the whole. The words thus explained afford us many, some of which are these. 1. That God the Father, and Christ his Son, are two distinct persons in the Godhead. 2. That by them, not excluding the Holy Ghost, is contrived and determined the salvation of fallen mankind. 3. That this contrivance resolved itself into a covenant between these persons in the Godhead, which standeth in giving on the Father’s part, and receiving on the Son’s. “All that the Father giveth me,” &c. 4. That every one that the Father hath given to Christ, according to the mind of God in the text, shall certainly come to him. 5. That coming to Jesus Christ is therefore not by the will, wisdom, or power of man; but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father. “All that the Father giveth me shall come.” 6. That Jesus Christ will be careful to receive, and will not in any wise reject those that come, or are coming to him. “And him that cometh to me I will in

no wise cast out." There are, besides these, some other truths implied in the words. As, 7. They that are coming to Jesus Christ are ofttimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them. 8. Jesus Christ would not have them that in truth are coming to him once think that he will cast them out.

These observations lie all of them in the words, and are plentifully confirmed by the Scriptures of truth; but I shall not at this time speak to them all, but shall pass by the first, second, third, fourth, and sixth, partly because I design brevity, and partly because they are touched upon in the explicatory part of the text. I shall therefore begin with the fifth observation, and so make that the first in order, in the following discourse.

[COMING TO CHRIST NOT BY THE POWER OF MAN, BUT BY THE DRAWING OF THE FATHER.]

OBSERVATION FIRST. First, then, *coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father*. This observation standeth of two parts. *First*, The coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man; *Second*, But by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father.

That the text carrieth this truth in its

bosom, you will find if you look into the explication of the first part thereof before. I shall, therefore, here follow the method propounded, viz: show,

First, That coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man. This is true, because the Word doth positively say it is not.

1. It denieth it wholly to be by the will of man. "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man" (John 1:13). And again, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth" (Rom 9:16).

2. It denieth it to be of the wisdom of man, as is manifest from these considerations:

(1.) In the wisdom of God it pleased him, that the world by wisdom should not know him. Now, if by their wisdom they cannot know him, it follows, by that wisdom, they cannot come unto him; for coming to him is not before, but after some knowledge of him (1 Cor 1:21; Acts 13:27; Psa 9:10).

(2.) The wisdom of man, in God's account, as to the knowledge of Christ, is reckoned foolishness. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor 1:20). And again, The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (2:14). If God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world; and again, if the wisdom of this world is foolishness with him, then

verily it is not likely, that by that a sinner should become so prudent as to come to Jesus Christ, especially if you consider,

(3.) That the doctrine of a crucified Christ, and so of salvation by him, is the very thing that is counted foolishness to the wisdom of the world. Now, if the very doctrine of a crucified Christ be counted foolishness by the wisdom of this world, it cannot be that, by that wisdom, a man should be drawn out in his soul to come to him (1 Cor 3:19; 1:18,23).

(4.) God counted the wisdom of this world one of his greatest enemies; therefore, by that wisdom no man can come to Jesus Christ. For it is not likely that one of God's greatest enemies should draw a man to that which best of all pleaseth God, as coming to Christ doth. Now, that God counteth the wisdom of this world one of his greatest enemies, is evident, (a.) For that it casteth the greatest contempt upon his Son's undertakings, as afore is proved, in that it counts his crucifixion foolishness; though that be one of the highest demonstrations of Divine wisdom (Eph 1:7,8). (b.) Because God hath threatened to destroy it, and bring it to nought, and cause it to perish; which surely he would not do, was it not an enemy, would it direct men to, and cause them to close with Jesus Christ (Isa 29:14; 1 Cor

1:19). (c.) He hath rejected it from helping in the ministry of his Word, as a fruitless business, and a thing that comes to nought (1 Cor 2:4,6,12,13). (d.) Because it causeth to perish, those that seek it, and pursue it (1 Cor 1:18,19). (e.) And God has proclaimed, that if any man will be wise in this world, he must be a fool in the wisdom of this world, and that is the way to be wise in the wisdom of God. "If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor 3:18-20).

3. Coming to Christ is not by the power of man. This is evident partly,

(1.) From that which goeth before. For man's power in the putting forth of it, in this matter, is either stirred up by love, or sense of necessity; but the wisdom of this world neither gives man love to, or sense of a need of, Jesus Christ; therefore, his power lieth still, as from that.

(2.) What power has he that is dead, as every natural man spiritually is, even dead in trespasses and sins? Dead, even as dead to God's New Testament things as he that is in his grave is dead to the things of this world. What power hath he, then, whereby to come to Jesus Christ? (John 5:25; Eph 2:1; Col 2:13).

(3.) God forbids the mighty man's glorying in his strength; and says positively, "By strength shall no man prevail;" and again, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord" (Jer 9:23,24; 1 Sam 2:9; Zech 4:6; 1 Cor 1:27-31).

(4.) Paul acknowledgeth that man, nay, converted man, of himself, hath not a sufficiency of power in himself to think a good thought; if not to do that which is least, for to think is less than to come; then no man, by his own power, can come to Jesus Christ (2 Cor 2:5).

(5.) Hence we are said to be made willing to come, by the power of God; to be raised from a state of sin to a state of grace, by the power of God; and to believe, that is to come, through the exceeding working of his mighty power (Psa 110:3; Col 2:12; Eph 1:18,20; Job 23:14). But this needed not, if either man had power or will to come; or so much as graciously to think of being willing to come, of themselves, to Jesus Christ.

Second, I should now come to the proof of the second part of the observation [*namely, the coming to Christ is by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father*], but that is occasionally done already, in the explicatory part of the text, to which I refer the reader; for I shall here only

give thee a text or two more to the same purpose, and so come to the use and application.

1. It is expressly said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). By this text, there is not only insinuated that in man is want of power, but also of will, to come to Jesus Christ: they must be drawn; they come not if they be not drawn. And observe, it is not man, no, nor all the angels in heaven, that can draw one sinner to Jesus Christ. No man cometh to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

2. Again, "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:65). It is an heavenly gift that maketh man come to Jesus Christ.

3. Again, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

I shall not enlarge, but shall make some use and application, and so come to the next observation.

[Use and Application of Observation First.]

Use First. Is it so? Is coming to Jesus Christ not by the will, wisdom, or power of man, but

by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then they are to blame that cry up the will, wisdom, and power of man, as things sufficient to bring men to Christ.

There are some men who think they may not be contradicted, when they plead for the will, wisdom, and power of man in reference to the things that are of the kingdom of Christ; but I will say to such a man, he never yet came to understand, that himself is what the Scripture teacheth concerning him; neither did he ever know what coming to Christ is, by the teaching, gift, and drawing of the Father. He is such a one that hath set up God's enemy in opposition to him, and that continueth in such acts of defiance; and what his end, without a new birth, will be, the Scripture teacheth also; but we will pass this.

Use Second. Is it so? Is coming to Jesus Christ by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then let saints here learn to ascribe their coming to Christ to the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father. Christian man, bless God, who hath given thee to Jesus Christ by promise; and again, bless God for that he hath drawn thee to him. And why is it thee? Why not another? O that the glory of electing love should rest upon thy head, and that the glory of the exceeding grace of God should take hold

of thy heart, and bring thee to Jesus Christ!

Use Third. Is it so, that coming to Jesus Christ is by the Father, as aforesaid? Then this should teach us to set a high esteem upon them that indeed are coming to Jesus Christ; I say, an high esteem on them, for the sake of him by virtue of whose grace they are made to come to Jesus Christ.

We see that when men, by the help of human abilities, do arrive at the knowledge of, and bring to pass that which, when done, is a wonder to the world, how he that did it, is esteemed and commended; yea, how are his wits, parts, industry, and unweariedness in all admired, and yet the man, as to this, is but of the world, and his work the effect of natural ability; the things also attained by him end in vanity and vexation of spirit. Further, perhaps in the pursuit of these his achievements, he sins against God, wastes his time vainly, and at long-run loses his soul by neglecting of better things; yet he is admired! But I say, if this man's parts, labour, diligence, and the like, will bring him to such applause and esteem in the world, what esteem should we have of such an one that is by the gift, promise, and power of God, coming to Jesus Christ?

1. This is a man with whom God is, in whom God works and walks; a man whose

motion is governed and steered by the mighty hand of God, and the effectual working of his power. Here is a man!

2. This man, by the power of God's might, which worketh in him, is able to cast a whole world behind him, with all the lusts and pleasures of it, and to charge through all the difficulties that men and devils can set against him. Here is a man.

3. This man is travelling to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the Judge of all, and to Jesus. Here is a man!

4. This man can look upon death with comfort, can laugh at destruction when it cometh, and longs to hear the sound of the last trump, and to see his Judge coming in the clouds of heaven. Here is a man indeed!

Let Christians, then, esteem each other as such. I know you do it; but do it more and more. And that you may, consider these two or three things. (1.) These are the objects of Christ's esteem (Matt 12:48,49; 15:22-28; Luke 7:9). (2.) These are the objects of the esteem of angels (Dan 9:12; 10:21,22; 13:3,4; Heb 2:14). (3.) These have been the objects of the esteem of heathens, when but convinced about them

(Dan 5:10,11; Acts 5:15; 1 Cor 14:24,25). "Let each [of you, then,] esteem [each] other better than themselves" (Phil 2:2).

Use Fourth. Again, Is it so, that no man comes to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then this shows us how horribly ignorant of this such are, who make the man that is coming to Christ the object of their contempt and rage. These are also unreasonable and wicked men; men in whom is no faith (2 Thess 3:2). Sinners, did you but know what a blessed thing it is to come to Jesus Christ, and that by the help and drawing of the Father, they do indeed come to him; you would hang and burn in hell a thousand years, before you would turn your spirits as you do, against him that God is drawing to Jesus Christ, and also against the God that draws him.

But, faithless sinner, let us a little expostulate the matter. What hath this man done against thee, that is coming to Jesus Christ? Why dost thou make him the object of thy scorn? doth his coming to Jesus Christ offend thee? doth his pursuing of his own salvation offend thee? doth his forsaking of his sins and pleasures offend thee?

Poor coming man! "Shall we *sacrifice* the

abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" (Exo 8:26).

But, I say, why offended at this? Is he ever the worse for coming to Jesus Christ, or for his loving and serving of Jesus Christ? Or is he ever the more a fool, for flying from that which will drown thee in hell-fire, and for seeking eternal life? Besides, pray, Sirs, consider it; this he doth, not of himself, but by the drawing of the Father. Come, let me tell thee in thine ear, thou that wilt not come to him thyself, and him that would, thou hinderest —

1. Thou shalt be judged for one that hath hated, maligned, and reproached Jesus Christ, to whom this poor sinner is coming.

2. Thou shalt be judged, too, for one that hath hated the Father, by whose powerful drawing this sinner doth come.

3. Thou shalt be taken and judged for one that has done despite to the Spirit of grace in him that is, by its help, coming to Jesus Christ. What sayest thou now? Wilt thou stand by thy doings? Wilt thou continue to contemn and reproach the living God? Thinkest thou that thou shalt weather it out well enough at the day of judgment? "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee," saith the Lord? (Eze 22:14, John 15:18-25; Jude 15; 1 Thess 4:8).

Use Fifth. Is it so, that no man comes to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then this showeth us how it comes to pass, that weak means are so powerful as to bring men out of their sins to a hearty pursuit after Jesus Christ. When God bid Moses speak to the people, he said, "I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee" (Exo 18:19). When God speaks, when God works, who can let it? None, none; then the work goes on! Elias threw his mantle upon the shoulders of Elisha; and what a wonderful work followed! When Jesus fell in with the crowing of a cock, what work was there! O when God is in the means, then shall that means —be it never so weak and contemptible in itself —work wonders (1 Kings 19:19; Matt 26:74,75; Mark 14:71,72; Luke 22:60-62). The world understood not, nor believed, that the walls of Jericho should fall at the sound of rams' horns; but when God will work, the means must be effectual. A word weakly spoken, spoken with difficulty, in temptation, and in the midst of great contempt and scorn, works wonders, if the Lord thy God will say so too.

Use Sixth. Is it so? Doth no man come to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of

the Father? Then here is room for Christians to stand and wonder at the effectual working of God's providences, that he hath made use of, as means to bring them to Jesus Christ.

For although men are drawn to Christ by the power of the Father, yet that power putteth forth itself in the use of means: and these means are divers, sometimes this, sometimes that; for God is at liberty to work by which, and when, and how he will; but let the means be what they will, and as contemptible as may be, yet God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and that out of weakness can make strong, can, nay, doth oftentimes make use of very unlikely means to bring about the conversion and salvation of his people. Therefore, you that are come to Christ —and that by unlikely means —stay yourselves, and wonder, and, wondering, magnify almighty power, by the work of which the means hath been made effectual to bring you to Jesus Christ.

What was the providence that God made use of as a means, either more remote or more near, to bring thee to Jesus Christ? Was it the removing of thy habitation, the change of thy condition, the loss of relations, estate, or the like? Was it thy casting of thine eye upon some good book, thy hearing of thy neighbours talk

of heavenly things, the beholding of God's judgments as executed upon others, or thine own deliverance from them, or thy being strangely cast under the ministry of some godly man? O take notice of such providence or providences! They were sent and managed by mighty power to do thee good. God himself, I say, hath joined himself unto this chariot: yea, and so blessed it, that it failed not to accomplish the thing for which he sent it.

God blesseth not to every one his providences in this manner. How many thousands are there in this world, that pass every day under the same providences! but God is not in them, to do that work by them as he hath done for thy poor soul, by his effectually working with them. O that Jesus Christ should meet thee in this providence, that dispensation, or the other ordinance! This is grace indeed! At this, therefore, it will be thy wisdom to admire, and for this to bless God.

Give me leave to give you a taste of some of those providences that have been effectual, through the management of God, to bring salvation to the souls of his people.

(1.) The first shall be that of the woman of Samaria. It must happen, that she must needs go out of the city to draw water, not before nor after, but just when Jesus Christ her Saviour

was come from far, and set to rest him, being weary, upon the well. What a blessed providence was this! Even a providence managed by the almighty wisdom, and almighty power, to the conversion and salvation of this poor creature. For by this providence was this poor creature and her Saviour brought together, that that blessed work might be fulfilled upon the woman, according to the purpose before determined by the Father (John 4).

(2.) What providence was it that there should be a tree in the way for Zaccheus to climb, thereby to give Jesus opportunity to call that chief of the publicans home to himself, even before he came down therefrom (Luke 19).

(3.) Was it not also wonderful that the thief, which you read of in the gospel, should, by the providence of God, be cast into prison, to be condemned even at that session that Christ himself was to die; nay, and that it should happen, too, that they must be hanged together, that the thief might be in hearing and observing of Jesus in his last words, that he might be converted by him before his death! (Luke 23).

(4.) What a strange providence was it, and as strangely managed by God, that Onesimus,

when he was run away from his master, should be taken, and, as I think, cast into that very prison where Paul lay bound for the Word of the gospel; that he might there be by him converted, and then sent home again to his master Philemon! Behold "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose" (Rom 8:28).

Nay, I have myself known some that have been made to go to hear the Word preached against their wills; others have gone not to hear, but to see and to be seen; nay, to jeer and flout others, as also to catch and carp at things. Some also to feed their adulterous eyes with the sight of beautiful objects; and yet God hath made use even of these things, and even of the wicked and sinful proposals of sinners, to bring them under the grace that might save their souls.

Use Seventh. Doth no man come to Jesus Christ but by the drawing, &c., of the Father? Then let me here caution those poor sinners, that are spectators of the change that God hath wrought in them that are coming to Jesus Christ, not to attribute this work and change to other things and causes.

There are some poor sinners in the world that plainly see a change, a mighty change, in

their neighbours and relations that are coming to Jesus Christ. But, as I said, they being ignorant, and not knowing whence it comes and whither it goes, for "so is every one that is born of the Spirit," (John 3:8), therefore they attribute this change to others causes: as melancholy; to sitting alone; to overmuch reading; to their going to too many sermons; to too much studying and musing on what they hear.

Also they conclude, on the other side, that it is for want of merry company; for want of physic; and therefore they advise them to leave off reading, going to sermons, the company of sober people; and to be merry, to go a gossiping, to busy themselves in the things of this world, not to sit musing alone, &c. But come, poor ignorant sinner, let me deal with thee. It seems thou art turned counsellor for Satan: I tell thee thou knowest not what thou dost. Take heed of spending thy judgment after this manner; thou judgest foolishly, and sayest in this, to every one that passeth by, thou art a fool. What! count convictions for sin, mournings for sin, and repentance for sin, melancholy? This is like those that on the other side said, "These men are [drunk with] full of new wine," &c. Or as he that said Paul was mad (Acts 2:13, 26:24). Poor ignorant

sinner! canst thou judge no better? What! is sitting alone, pensive under God's hand, reading the Scriptures, and hearing of sermons, &c., the way to be undone? The Lord open thine eyes, and make thee to see thine error! Thou hast set thyself against God, thou hast despised the operation of his hands, thou attemptest to murder souls. What! canst thou give no better counsel touching those whom God hath wounded, than to send them to the ordinances of hell for help? Thou biddest them be merry and lightsome; but dost thou not know that "the heart of fools is in the house of mirth?" (Eccl 7:4).

Thou biddest them shun the hearing of thundering preachers; but is it not "better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools?" (Eccl 7:5). Thou biddest them busy themselves in the things of this world; but dost thou not know that the Lord bids, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness?" (Matt 6:33). Poor ignorant sinner! hear the counsel of God to such, and learn thyself to be wiser. "Is any afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13). "Blessed *is* the man that heareth me" (Prov 8:32). And hear for time to come, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). "Search the

Scriptures" (John 5:39). "Give attendance to reading" (1 Tim 4:13). "It is better to go to the house of mourning" (Eccl 7:2,3).

And wilt thou judge him that doth thus? Art thou almost like Elymas the sorcerer, that sought to turn the deputy from the faith? Thou seekest to pervert the right ways of the Lord. Take heed lest some heavy judgment overtake thee (Acts 13:8-13). What! teach men to quench convictions; take men off from a serious consideration of the evil of sin, of the terrors of the world to come, and how they shall escape the same? What! teach men to put God and his Word out of their minds, by running to merry company, by running to the world, by gossiping? &c. This is as much as to bid them to say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;" or, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? or what profit have we if we keep his ways?" Here is a devil in grain! What! bid man walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2).

[Two objections answered.]

Object. 1. But we do not know that such are coming to Jesus Christ; truly we wonder at

them, and think they are fools.

Answ. Do you not know that they are coming to Jesus Christ? then they may be coming to him, for aught you know; and why will ye be worse than the brute, to speak evil of the things you know not? What! are ye made to be taken and destroyed? must ye utterly perish in your own corruptions? (2 Peter 2:12). Do you not know them? Let them alone then. If you cannot speak good of them, speak not bad. "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38,39). But why do you wonder at a work of conviction and conversion? Know you not that this is the judgment of God upon you, "ye despisers, to behold, and wonder, and perish?" (Acts 13:40,41). But why wonder, and think they are fools? Is the way of the just an abomination to you? See that passage, and be ashamed, "*He that is* upright in the way *is* abomination to the wicked" (Prov 29:27). Your wondering at them argues that you are strangers to yourselves, to conviction for sin, and to hearty desires to be saved; as also to coming to Jesus Christ.

Object. 2. But how shall we know that such

men are coming to Jesus Christ?

Answ. Who can make them see that Christ has made blind? (John 2:8,9). Nevertheless, because I endeavour thy conviction, conversion, and salvation, consider: Do they cry out of sin, being burthened with it, as of an exceeding bitter thing? Do they fly from it, as from the face of a deadly serpent? Do they cry out of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, as to justification in the sight of God? Do they cry out after the Lord Jesus, to save them? Do they see more worth and merit in one drop of Christ's blood to save them, than in all the sins of the world to damn them? Are they tender of sinning against Jesus Christ? Is his name, person, and undertakings, more precious to them, than is the glory of the world? Is this word more dear unto them? Is faith in Christ (of which they are convinced by God's Spirit of the want of, and that without it they can never close with Christ) precious to them? Do they savour Christ in his Word, and do they leave all the world for his sake? And are they willing, God helping them, to run hazards for his name, for the love they bear to him? Are his saints precious to them? If these things be so, whether thou seest them or no, these men are coming to Jesus Christ (Rom 7:914; Psa 38:3-8; Heb 6:18-20; Isa 64:6; Phil 3:7,8; Psa 54:1;

109:26; Acts 16:30; Psa 51:7,8; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Rom 7:24; 2 Cor 5:2; Acts 5:41; James 2:7; Song 5:10-16; Psa 119; John 13:35; 1 John 4:7; 3:14; John 16:9; Rom 14:23; Heb 11:6; Psa 19:10,11; Jer 15:16; Heb 11:24-27; Acts 20:22-24; 21:13; Titus 3:15; 2 John 1; Eph 4:16; Phile 7; 1 Cor 16:24).

[COMERS OFTTIMES AFRAID THAT CHRIST WILL NOT RECEIVE THEM.]

OBSERVATION SECOND. —I come now to the second observation propounded to be spoken to, to wit, That they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are ofttimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them.

I told you that this observation is implied in the text; and I gather it,

First, From the largeness and openness of the promise: "I will in no wise cast out." For had there not been a proneness in us to "fear casting out," Christ needed not to have, as it were, waylaid our fear, as he doth by this great and strange expression, "In no wise;" "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." There needed not, as I may say, such a promise to be invented by the wisdom of heaven, and worded at such a rate, as it were on purpose to dash in pieces at one blow all the objections of coming sinners, if they were not prone to

admit of such objections, to the discouraging of their own souls. For this word, "in no wise," cutteth the throat of all objections; and it was dropped by the Lord Jesus for that very end; and to help the faith that is mixed with unbelief. And it is, as it were, the sum of all promises; neither can any objection be made upon the unworthiness that thou findest in thee, that this promise will not assoil.

But I am a great sinner, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I am an old sinner, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I am a hard-hearted sinner, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I am a backsliding sinner, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have served Satan all my days, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have sinned against light, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have sinned against mercy, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

But I have no good thing to bring with me, sayest thou.

"I will in no wise cast out," says Christ.

Thus I might go on to the end of things, and show you, that still this promise was provided to answer all objections, and doth answer them. But I say, what need it be, if they that are coming to Jesus Christ are not sometimes, yea, oftentimes, heartily afraid, "that Jesus Christ will cast them out?"

Second, I will give you now two instances that seem to imply the truth of this observation.

In the ninth of Matthew, at the second verse, you read of a man that was sick of the palsy; and he was coming to Jesus Christ, being borne upon a bed by his friends: he also was coming himself, and that upon another account than any of his friends were aware of; even for the pardon of sins, and the salvation of his soul. Now, so soon as ever he was come into the presence of Christ, Christ bids him "be of good cheer." It seems then, his heart was fainting; but what was the cause of his fainting? Not his bodily infirmity, for the cure of which his friends did bring him to Christ; but the guilt and burden of his sins, for the pardon of which himself did come to him; therefore he proceeds, "Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." I say, Christ saw him sinking in his mind, about how it would go with his most noble part; and therefore, first, he applies

himself to him upon that account. For though his friends had faith enough as to the cure of the body, yet he himself had little enough as to the cure of his soul: therefore Christ takes him up as a man falling down, saying, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

That about the Prodigal seems pertinent also to this matter: "When he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." Heartily spoken; but how did he perform his promise? I think not so well as he promised to do; and my ground for my thoughts is, because his father, so soon as he was come to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him; implying, methinks, as if the prodigal by this time was dejected in his mind; and therefore his father gives him the most sudden and familiar token of reconciliation. And kisses were of old time often used to remove doubts and fears. Thus Laban and Esau kiss Jacob. Thus Joseph kissed his brethren; and thus also David kissed Absalom (Gen 31:55; 33:1-4; 48:9,10; 2 Sam 14:33). It is true, as I said, at first setting out, he spake heartily, as sometimes sinners also do in their beginning to come to Jesus Christ; but might not he, yea, in all probability he had, between the first step

he took, and the last, by which he accomplished that journey, many a thought, both this way and that; as whether his father would receive him or no? As thus: I said, "I would go to my Father." But how, if when I come at him he should ask me, Where I have all this while been? What must I say then? Also, if he ask me, What is become of the portion of goods that he gave me? What shall I say then? If he asks me, Who have been my companions? What shall I say then? If he also shall ask me, What hath been my preferment in all the time of my absence from him? What shall I say then? Yea, and if he ask me, Why I came home no sooner? What shall I say then? Thus, I say, might he reason with himself, and being conscious to himself, that he could give but a bad answer to any of these interrogatories, no marvel if he stood in need first of all of a kiss from his father's lips. For had he answered the first in truth, he must say, I have been a haunter of taverns and ale-houses; and as for my portion, I spent it in riotous living; my companions were whores and drabs; as for my preferment, the highest was, that I became a hog-herd; and as for my not coming home till now, could I have made shift to have staid abroad any longer, I had not lain at thy feet for mercy now.

I say, these things considered, and considering, again, how prone poor man is to give way, when truly awakened, to despondings and heart misgivings, no marvel if he did sink in his mind, between the time of his first setting out, and that of his coming to his Father.

Third, But, thirdly, methinks I have for the confirmation of this truth *the consent of all the saints that are under heaven*, to wit, That they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are ofttimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them.

Quest. But what should be the reason? I will answer to this question thus:

1. It is not for want of the revealed will of God, that manifesteth grounds for the contrary, for of that there is a sufficiency; yea, the text itself hath laid a sufficient foundation for encouragement, for them that are coming to Jesus Christ. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

2. It is not for want of any invitation to come, for that is full and plain. "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28).

3. Neither is it for want of a manifestation of Christ's willingness to receive, as those texts above named, with that which follows,

declareth, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (John 7:37).

4. It is not for want of exceeding great and precious promises to receive them that come. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor 6:17,18).

5. It is not for want of solemn oath and engagement to save them that come. “For - because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself - that by two immutable things, in which it *was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb 6:13-18).

6. Neither is it for want of great examples of God’s mercy, that have come to Jesus Christ, of which we read most plentifully in the Word. Therefore, it must be concluded, it is for want of that which follows.

[What it is that prevents the coming to Christ.]

First, It is for want of the knowledge of Christ. Thou knowest but little of the grace and kindness that is in the heart of Christ; thou knowest but little of the virtue and merit

of his blood; thou knowest but little of the willingness that is in his heart to save thee; and this is the reason of the fear that ariseth in thy heart, and that causeth thee to doubt that Christ will not receive thee. Unbelief is the daughter of Ignorance. Therefore Christ saith, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe" (Luke 24:25).

Slowness of heart to believe, flows from thy foolishness in the things of Christ; this is evident to all that are acquainted with themselves, and are seeking after Jesus Christ. The more ignorance, the more unbelief. The more knowledge of Christ, the more faith. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee" (Psa 9:10). He, therefore, that began to come to Christ but the other day, and hath yet but little knowledge of him, he fears that Christ will not receive him. But he that hath been longer acquainted with him, he "is strong, and hath overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:13). When Joseph's brethren came into Egypt to buy corn, it is said, "Joseph knew his brethren, but his brethren knew not him." What follows? Why, great mistrust of heart about their speeding well; especially, if Joseph did but answer them roughly, calling them spies, and questioning their truth and the like. And observe it, so long as their ignorance

about their brother remained with them, whatsoever Joseph did, still they put the worse sense upon it. For instance, Joseph upon a time bids the steward of his house bring them home, to dine with him, to dine even in Joseph's house. And how is this resented by them? Why, they are afraid. "And the men were afraid, because they were brought unto" their brother "Joseph's house." And they said, He seeketh occasion against us, and will fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses (Gen 42, 43). What! afraid to go to Joseph's house? He was their brother; he intended to feast them; to feast them, and to feast with them. Ah! but they were ignorant that he was their brother. And so long as their ignorance lasted, so long their fear terrified them. Just thus it is with the sinner that but of late is coming to Jesus Christ. He is ignorant of the love and pity that is in Christ to coming sinners. Therefore he doubts, therefore he fears, therefore his heart misgives him.

Coming sinner, Christ inviteth thee to dine and sup with him. He inviteth thee to a banquet of wine, yea, to come into his wine-cellar, and his banner over thee shall be love (Rev 3:20; Song 2:5). But I doubt it, says the sinner: but, it is answered, he calls thee, invites thee to his banquet, flagons, apples; to

his wine, and to the juice of his pomegranate. "O, I fear, I doubt, I mistrust, I tremble in expectation of the contrary!" Come out of the man, thou dastardly ignorance! Be not afraid, sinner, only believe; "He that cometh to Christ he will in no wise cast out."

Let the coming sinner, therefore, seek after more of the good knowledge of Jesus Christ. Press after it, seek it as silver, and dig for it as for hid treasure. This will embolden thee; this will make thee wax stronger and stronger. "I know whom I have believed," I know him, said Paul; and what follows? Why, "and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day" (2 Tim 1:12). What had Paul committed to Jesus Christ? The answer is, He had *committed to him his soul*. But why did he commit his soul to him? Why, because he knew him. He knew him to be faithful, to be kind. He knew he would not fail him, nor forsake him; and therefore he laid his soul down at his feet, and committed it to him, to keep against that day. But,

Second, Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee *may be also a consequent of thy earnest and strong desires after thy salvation by him*. For this I observe, that strong desires to have, are attended with strong fears of

missing. What man most sets his heart upon, and what his desires are most after, he ofttimes most fears he shall not obtain. So the man, the ruler of the synagogue, had a great desire that his daughter should live; and that desire was attended with fear, that she should not. Wherefore, Christ saith unto him, "Be not afraid" (Mark 5:36).

Suppose a young man should have his heart much set upon a virgin to have her to wife, if ever he fears he shall not obtain her, it is when he begins to love; now, thinks he, somebody will step in betwixt my love and the object of it; either they will find fault with my person, my estate, my conditions, or something! Now thoughts begin to work; she doth not like me, or something. And thus it is with the soul at first coming to Jesus Christ, thou lovest him, and thy love produceth jealousy, and that jealousy ofttimes begets fears.

Now thou fearest the sins of thy youth, the sins of thine old age, the sins of thy calling, the sins of thy Christian duties, the sins of thine heart, or something; thou thinkest something or other will alienate the heart and affections of Jesus Christ from thee; thou thinkest he sees something in thee, for the sake of which he will refuse thy soul. But be content, a little

more knowledge of him will make thee take better heart; thy earnest desires shall not be attended with such burning fears; thou shalt hereafter say, "This *is* my infirmity" (Psa 77:10).

Thou art sick of love, a very sweet disease, and yet every disease has some weakness attending of it: yet I wish this distemper, if it be lawful to call it so, was more epidemical. Die of this disease I would gladly do; it is better than life itself, though it be attended with fears. But thou criest, I cannot obtain: well, be not too hasty in making conclusions. If Jesus Christ had not put his finger in at the hole of the lock, thy bowels would not have been troubled for him (Song 5:4). Mark how the prophet hath it, "They shall walk after the Lord; he shall roar like a lion; when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west, they shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria" (Hosea 11:10,11). When God roars (as ofttimes the coming soul hears him roar), what man that is coming can do otherwise than tremble? (Amos 3:8). But trembling he comes: "He sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas" (Acts 16:29).

Should you ask him that we mentioned but now, How long is it since you began to fear you

should miss of this damsel you love so? The answer will be, Ever since I began to love her. But did you not fear it before? No, nor should I fear it now, but that I vehemently love her. Come, sinner, let us apply it: How long is it since thou began to fear that Jesus Christ will not receive thee? Thy answer is, Ever since I began to desire that he would save my soul. I began to fear, when I began to come; and the more my heart burns in desires after him, the more I feel my heart fear I shall not be saved by him. See now, did not I tell thee that thy fears were but the consequence of strong desires? Well, fear not, coming sinner, thousands of coming souls are in thy condition, and yet they will get safe into Christ's bosom: "Say," says Christ, "to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; your God will come and save you" (Isa 35:4; 63:1).

Third, Thy fear that Christ will not receive thee *may arise from a sense of thine own unworthiness*. Thou seest what a poor, sorry, wretched, worthless creature thou art; and seeing this, thou fearest Christ will not receive thee. Alas, sayest thou, I am the vilest of all men; a town-sinner, a ringleading sinner! I am not only a sinner myself, but have made others twofold worse the children of hell also. Besides, now I am under some awakenings and stirrings

of mind after salvation, even now I find my heart rebellious, carnal, hard, treacherous, desperate, prone to unbelief, to despair: it forgetteth the Word; it wandereth; it runneth to the ends of the earth. There is not, I am persuaded, one in all the world that hath such a desperate wicked heart as mine is; my soul is careless to do good, but none more earnest to do that which is evil.

Can such a one as I am, live in glory? Can a holy, a just, and a righteous God, once think (with honour to his name) of saving such a vile creature as I am? I fear it. Will he show wonders to such a dead dog as I am? I doubt it. I am cast out to the loathing of my person, yea, I loath myself; I stink in mine own nostrils. How can I then be accepted by a holy and sin-abhorring God? (Psa 38:5-7; Eze 11; 20:42,-44). Saved I would be; and who is there that would not, were they in my condition? Indeed, I wonder at the madness and folly of others, when I see them leap and skip so carelessly about the mouth of hell! Bold sinner, how darest thou tempt God, by laughing at the breach of his holy law? But alas! they are not so bad one way, but I am worse another: I wish myself were anybody but myself; and yet here again, I know not what to wish. When I see such as I believe are coming to Jesus Christ, O

I bless them! But I am confounded in myself, to see how unlike, as I think, I am to every good man in the world. They can read, hear, pray, remember, repent, be humble, do everything better than so vile a wretch as I. I, vile wretch, am good for nothing but to burn in hell-fire, and when I think of that, I am confounded too!

Thus the sense of unworthiness creates and heightens fears in the hearts of them that are coming to Jesus Christ; but indeed it should not; for who needs the physician but the sick? or who did Christ come into the world to save, but the chief of sinners? (Mark 2:17; 1 Tim 1:15). Wherefore, the more thou seest thy sins, the faster fly thou to Jesus Christ. And let the sense of thine own unworthiness prevail with thee yet to go faster. As it is with the man that carrieth his broken arm in a sling to the bone-setter, still as he thinks of his broken arm, and as he feels the pain and anguish, he hastens his pace to the man. And if Satan meets thee, and asketh, Whither goest thou? tell him thou art maimed, and art going to the Lord Jesus. If he objects thine own unworthiness, tell him, That even as the sick seeketh the physician; as he that hath broken bones seeks him that can set them; so thou art going to Jesus Christ for cure and healing for

thy sin sick soul. But it ofttimes happeneth to him that flies for his life, he despairs of escaping, and therefore delivers himself up into the hand of the pursuer. But up, up, sinner; be of good cheer, Christ came to save the unworthy ones: be not faithless, but believe. Come away, man, the Lord Jesus calls thee, saying, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Fourth. Thy fear that Christ will not receive thee, *may arise from a sense of the exceeding mercy of being saved*; sometimes salvation is in the eyes of him that desires so great, so huge, so wonderful a thing, that the very thoughts of the excellency of it, engenders unbelief about obtaining it, in the heart of those that unfeignedly desire it. "Seemeth it to you," saith David, "*a* light *thing* to be a king's son-in-law?" (1 Sam 18:23). So the thoughts of the greatness and glory of the thing propounded, as heaven, eternal life, eternal glory, to be with God, and Christ, and angels; these are great things, things too good, saith the soul that is little in his own eyes; things too rich, saith the soul that is truly poor in spirit, for me.

Besides, the Holy Ghost hath a way to greaten heavenly things to the understanding of the coming sinner; yea, and at the same

time to greaten, too, the sin and unworthiness of that sinner. Now the soul staggeringly wonders, saying, What! to be made like angels, like Christ, to live in eternal bliss, joy, and felicity! This is for angels, and for them that can walk like angels! If a prince, a duke, an earl, should send (by the hand of his servant) for some poor, sorry, beggarly scrub, to take her for his master to wife, and the servant should come and say, My lord and master, such an one hath sent me to thee, to take thee to him to wife; he is rich, beautiful, and of excellent qualities; he is loving, meek, humble, well-spoken, &c. What now would this poor, sorry, beggarly creature think? What would she say? or how would she frame an answer? When king David sent to Abigail upon this account, and though she was a rich woman, yet she said, "Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord" (1 Sam 25:40,41). She was confounded, she could not well tell what to say, the offer was so great, beyond what could in reason be expected.

But suppose this great person should second his suit, and send to this sorry creature again, what would she say now? Would she not say, You mock me? But what if he affirms that he is in good earnest, and that his lord must have her to wife; yea, suppose he should prevail

upon her to credit his message, and to address herself for her journey; yet, behold every thought of her pedigree confounds her; also her sense of want of beauty makes her ashamed; and if she doth but think of being embraced, the unbelief that is mixed with that thought whirls her into tremblings; and now she calls herself fool, for believing the messenger, and thinks not to go; if she thinks of being bold, she blushes; and the least thought that she shall be rejected, when she comes at him, makes her look as if she would give up the ghost.

And is it a wonder, then, to see a soul that is drowned in the sense of glory and a sense of its own nothingness, to be confounded in itself, and to fear that the glory apprehended is too great, too good, and too rich, for such an one? That thing, heaven and eternal glory, is so great, and I that would have it, so small, so sorry a creature, that the thoughts of obtaining it confounds me.

Thus, I say, doth the greatness of the things desired, quite dash and overthrow the mind of the desirer. O, it is too big! it is too big! it is too great a mercy! But, coming sinner, let me reason with thee. Thou sayest, it is too big, too great. Well, will things that are less satisfy thy soul? Will a less thing than heaven, than glory

and eternal life, answer thy desires? No, nothing less; and yet I fear they are too big, and too good for me, ever to obtain. Well, as big and as good as they are, God giveth them to such as thou; they are not too big for God to give; no, not too big to give freely. Be content; let God give like himself; he is that eternal God, and giveth like himself. When kings give, they do not use to give as poor men do. Hence it is said, that Nabal made a feast in his house like the feast of a king; and again, "All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto David" (1 Sam 25:36; 2 Sam 24:23). Now, God is a great king, let him give like a king; nay, let him give like himself, and do thou receive like thyself. He hath all, and thou hast nothing. God told his people of old, that he would save them in truth and in righteousness, and that they should return to, and enjoy the land, which before, for their sins, had spewed them out; and then adds, under a supposition of their counting the mercy too good, or too big, "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech 8:6).

As who should say, they are now in captivity, and little in their own eyes; therefore they think the mercy of returning to Canaan is

a mercy too marvellously big for them to enjoy; but if it be so in their eyes, it is not so in mine; I will do for them like God, if they will but receive my bounty like sinners. Coming sinner, God can give his heavenly Canaan, and the glory of it, unto thee; yea, none ever had them but as a gift, a free gift. He hath given us his Son, "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:32).

It was not the worthiness of Abraham, or Moses, or David or Peter, or Paul, but the mercy of God, that made them inheritors of heaven. If God thinks thee worthy, judge not thyself unworthy; but take it, and be thankful. And it is a good sign he intends to give thee, if he hath drawn out thy heart to ask. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cause thine ear to hear" (Psa 10:17).

When God is said to incline his ear, it implies an intention to bestow the mercy desired. Take it therefore; thy wisdom will be to receive, not sticking at thy own unworthiness. It is said, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." Again, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that

he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of his people" (1 Sam 2:8; Psa 113:7,8). You see also when God made a wedding for his Son, he called not the great, nor the rich, nor the mighty; but the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind (Matt 12; Luke 14).

Fifth. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee *may arise from the hideous roaring of the devil, who pursues thee*. He that hears him roar, must be a mighty Christian, if he can at that time deliver himself from fear. He is called a roaring lion; and then to allude to that in Isaiah, "If one look" into them, they have "darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof" (1 Peter 5:8; Isa 5:3).

[*Two of the devil's objections*.] —There are two things among many that Satan useth to roar out after them that are coming to Jesus Christ. 1. *That they are not elected*. Or, 2. *That they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost*. To both these I answer briefly —

1. [*Election*.] —Touching election, out of which thou fearest thou art excluded. Why, coming sinner, even the text itself affordeth thee help against this doubt, and that by a double argument.

(1.) That coming to Christ is by virtue of the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father;

but thou art a-coming; therefore God hath given thee, promised thee, and is drawing thee to Jesus Christ. Coming sinner, hold to this; and when Satan beginneth to roar again, answer, But I feel my heart moving after Jesus Christ; but that would not be, if it were not given by promise, and drawing to Christ by the power of the Father.

(2.) Jesus Christ hath promised, "That him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out." And if he hath said it, will he not make it good, I mean even thy salvation? For, as I have said already, not to cast out, is to receive and admit to the benefit of salvation. If then the Father hath given thee, as is manifest by thy coming; and if Christ will receive thee, thou coming soul, as it is plain he will, because he hath said, "He will in no wise cast out;" then be confident, and let those conclusions, that as naturally flow from the text as light from the sun, or water from the fountain, stay thee.

If Satan therefore objecteth, But thou art not elected; answer, But I am coming, Satan, I am coming; and that I could not be, but that the Father draws me; and I am coming to such a Lord Jesus, as will in no wise cast me out. Further, Satan, were I not elect, the Father would not draw me, nor would the Son so graciously open his bosom to me. I am

persuaded, that not one of the nonelect shall ever be able to say, no, not in the day of judgment, I did sincerely come to Jesus Christ. Come they may, feignedly, as Judas and Simon Magus did; but that is not our question. Therefore, O thou honest-hearted coming sinner, be not afraid, but come.

2. [*Of the sin against the Holy Ghost*.] —As to the second part of the objection, about sinning the sin against the Holy Ghost, the same argument overthrows that also. But I will argue thus:

(1.) Coming to Christ is by virtue of a special gift of the Father; but the Father giveth no such gift to them that have sinned that sin; therefore thou that art coming hast not committed that sin. That the Father giveth no such gift to them that have sinned that sin is evident —(a.) Because such have sinned themselves out of God's favour; "They shall never have forgiveness" (Matt 12:32). But it is a special favour of God to give unto a man, to come to Jesus Christ; because thereby he obtaineth forgiveness. Therefore he that cometh hath not sinned that sin. (b.) They that have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, have sinned themselves out of an interest in the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood; "There remaineth [for such] no more sacrifice for

sins" (Heb 10:26). But God giveth not grace to any of them to come to Christ, that have no share in the sacrifice of his body and blood. Therefore, thou that art coming to him, hast not sinned that sin.

(2.) Coming to Christ is by the special drawing of the Father; "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). But the Father draweth not him to Christ, for whom he hath not allotted forgiveness by his blood; therefore they that are coming to Jesus Christ have not committed that sin, because he hath allotted them forgiveness by his blood. That the Father cannot draw them to Jesus Christ, for whom he hath not allotted forgiveness of sins, is manifest to sense: for that would be a plain mockery, a flam, [17] neither becoming his wisdom, justice, holiness, nor goodness.

(3.) Coming to Jesus Christ lays a man under the promise of forgiveness and salvation. But it is impossible that he that hath sinned that sin should ever be put under a promise of these. Therefore, he that hath sinned that sin can never have heart to come to Jesus Christ.

(4.) Coming to Jesus Christ lays a man under his intercession. "For he ever liveth to

[17] "A flam;" a fable, an imposition.

make intercession for them that come" (Heb 7:25). Therefore, he that is coming to Jesus Christ cannot have sinned that sin. Christ has forbidden his people to pray for them that have sinned that sin; and, therefore, will not pray for them himself, but he prays for them that come.

(5.) He that hath sinned that sin, Christ is to him of no more worth than is a man that is dead; "For he hath crucified to himself the Son of God;" yea, and hath also counted his precious blood as the blood of an unholy thing. (Heb 6, 10) Now, he that hath this low esteem of Christ will never come to him for life; but the coming man has an high esteem of his person, blood, and merits. Therefore, he that is coming has not committed that sin.

(6.) If he that has sinned this sin might yet come to Jesus Christ, then must the truth of God be overthrown; which saith in one place, "He hath never forgiveness;" and in another, "I will in no wise cast him out." Therefore, that he may never have forgiveness, he shall never have heart to come to Jesus Christ. It is impossible that such an one should be renewed, either to or by repentance (Heb 6). Wherefore, never trouble thy head nor heart about this matter; he that cometh to Jesus Christ cannot have sinned against the Holy Ghost.

Sixth, Thy fears that Christ will not receive

thee *may arise from thine own folly, in inventing, yea, in thy chalking out to God, a way to bring thee home to Jesus Christ*. Some souls that are coming to Jesus Christ are great tormentors of themselves upon this account; they conclude, that if their coming to Jesus Christ is right, they must needs be brought home thus and thus.

As to instance: 1. Says one, If God be bringing of me to Jesus Christ, then will he load me with the guilt of sin till he makes me roar again. 2. If God be indeed a-bringing me home to Jesus Christ, then must I be assaulted with dreadful temptations of the devil. 3. If God be indeed a-bringing me to Jesus Christ, then, even when I come at him, I shall have wonderful revelations of him.

This is the way that some sinners appoint for God; but, perhaps, he will not walk therein; yet will he bring them to Jesus Christ. But now, because they come not the way of their own chalking out, therefore they are at a loss. They look for heavy load and burden; but, perhaps, God gives them a sight of their lost condition, and addeth not that heavy weight and burden. They look for fearful temptations of Satan; but God sees that yet they are not fit for them, nor is the time come that he should be honoured by them in such a condition. They look for

great and glorious revelations of Christ, grace, and mercy; but, perhaps, God only takes the yoke from off their jaws, and lays meat before them. And now again they are at a loss, yet a-coming to Jesus Christ; "I drew them," saith God, "with cords of a man, with bands of love - I took the yoke from off their jaws, and laid meat unto them" (Hosea 11:4).

Now, I say, If God brings thee to Christ, and not by the way that thou hast appointed, then thou art at a loss; and for thy being at a loss, thou mayest thank thyself. God hath more ways than thou knowest of to bring a sinner to Jesus Christ; but he will not give thee beforehand an account by which of them he will bring thee to Christ (Isa 40:13; Job 33:13). Sometimes he hath his ways in the whirlwind; but sometimes the Lord is not there (Nahum 1:3; 1 Kings 19:11). If God will deal more gently with thee than with others of his children, grudge not at it; refuse not the waters that go softly, lest he bring upon thee the waters of the rivers, strong and many, even these two smoking firebrand, the devil and guilt of sin (Isa 8:6,7). He saith to Peter, "Follow me." And what thunder did Zaccheus hear or see? Zaccheus, "Come down," said Christ; "and he came down," says Luke, "and received him joyfully."

But had Peter or Zaccheus made the objection that thou hast made, and directed the Spirit of the Lord as thou hast done, they might have looked long enough before they had found themselves coming to Jesus Christ. Besides, I will tell thee, that the greatness of sense of sin, the hideous roaring of the devil, yea, and abundance of revelations, will not prove that God is bringing thy soul to Jesus Christ; as Balaam, Cain, Judas, and others, can witness.

Further, consider that what thou hast not of these things here, thou mayest have another time, and that to thy distraction. Wherefore, instead of being discontent, because thou art not in the fire, because thou hearest not the sound of the trumpet and alarm of war, "Pray that thou enter not into temptation;" yea, come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in that time of need (Psa 88:15; Matt 26:41; Heb 4:16).

Poor creature! thou criest, if I were tempted, I could come faster and with more confidence to Christ. Thou sayest thou knowest not what. What says Job? "Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid. Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me" (Job 13:21,22). It is not the overheavy load of

sin, but the discovery of mercy; not the roaring of the devil, but the drawing of the Father, that makes a man come to Jesus Christ; I myself know all these things.

True, sometimes, yea, most an end,[18] they that come to Jesus Christ come the way that thou desirest; the loading, tempted way; but the Lord also leads some by the waters of comfort. If I was to choose when to go a long journey, to wit, whether I would go it in the dead of winter or in the pleasant spring, though, if it was a very profitable journey, as that of coming to Christ is, I would choose to go it through fire and water before I would choose lose the benefit. But, I say, if I might choose the time, I would choose to go it in the pleasant spring, because the way would be more delightsome, the days longer and warmer, the nights shorter and not so cold. And it is observable, that that very argument that thou usest to weaken thy strength in the way, that very argument Christ Jesus useth to encourage his beloved to come to him: "Rise up," saith he, "my love, my fair one, and come away." Why? "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over *and* gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing *of birds* is come, and the voice of

[18] "Most an end;" continually, perpetually.

the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good* smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song 2:10-13).

Trouble not thyself, coming sinner. If thou seest thy lost condition by original and actual sin; if thou seest thy need of the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ; if thou art willing to be found in him, and to take up thy cross and follow him; then pray for a fair wind and good weather, and come away. Stick no longer in a muse and doubt about things, but come away to Jesus Christ. Do it, I say, lest thou tempt God to lay the sorrows of a travailing woman upon thee. Thy folly in this thing may make him do it. Mind what follows: "The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him." Why? "He *is* an unwise son; for he should not stay long in *the place of* the breaking forth of children" (Hosea 13:13).

Seventh, Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee *may arise from those decays that thou findest in thy soul, even while thou art coming to him*. Some, even as they are coming to Jesus Christ, do find themselves grow worse and worse; and this is indeed a sore trial to the poor coming sinner.

[Fears that we do not run fast enough.]

To explain myself. There is such an one a coming to Jesus Christ who, when at first he began to look out after him, was sensible, affectionate, and broken in spirit; but now is grown dark, senseless, hard-hearted, and inclining to neglect spiritual duties, &c. Besides, he now finds in himself inclinations to unbelief, atheism, blasphemy, and the like; now he finds he cannot tremble at God's Word, his judgment, nor at the apprehension of hell fire; neither can he, as he thinketh, be sorry for these things. Now, this is a sad dispensation. The man under the sixth head complaineth for want of temptations, but thou hast enough of them; art thou glad of them, tempted, coming sinner? They that never were exercised with them may think it a fine thing to be within the range, but he that is there is ready to sweat blood for sorrow of heart, and to howl for vexation of spirit! This man is in the wilderness among wild beasts. Here he sees a bear, there a lion, yonder a leopard, a wolf, a dragon; devils of all sorts, doubts of all sorts, fears of all sorts, haunt and molest his soul. Here he sees smoke, yea, feels fire and brimstone, scattered upon his secret places. He hears the sound of an horrible tempest. O! my friends, even the Lord Jesus, that knew all things, even he saw no

pleasure in temptations, nor did he desire to be with them; wherefore, one text saith, "he was led," and another, "he was driven," of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil (Matt 4:1; Mark 1:12).

But to return. Thus it happeneth sometimes to them that are coming to Jesus Christ. A sad hap indeed! One would think that he that is flying from wrath to come has little need of such clogs as these. And yet so it is, and woeful experience proves it. The church of old complained that her enemies overtook her between the straits; just between hope and fear, heaven and hell (Lam 1).

This man feeleth the infirmity of his flesh, he findeth a proneness in himself to be desperate. Now, he chides with God, flings and tumbles like a wild bull in a net, and still the guilt of all returns upon himself, to the crushing of him to pieces. Yet he feeleth his heart so hard, that he can find, as he thinks, no kind falling under any of his miscarriages. Now, he is a lump of confusion in his own eyes, whose spirit and actions are without order.

Temptations serve the Christian as the shepherd's dog serveth the silly sheep; that is, coming behind the flock, he runs upon it, pulls it down, worries it, wounds it, and grievously bedabbleth it with dirt and wet, in the lowest

places of the furrows of the field, and not leaving it until it is half dead, nor then neither, except God rebuke.

Here is now room for fears of being cast away. Now I see I am lost, says the sinner. This is not coming to Jesus Christ, says the sinner; such a desperate, hard, and wretched heart as mine is, cannot be a gracious one, saith the sinner. And bid such an one be better, he says, I cannot; no, I cannot.

[Why temptations assail God's people.]

Quest. But what will you say to a soul in this condition?

Answ. I will say, That temptations have attended the best of God's people. I will say, That temptations come to do us good; and I will say also, That there is a difference betwixt growing worse and worse, and thy seeing more clearly how bad thou art.

There is a man of an ill-favoured countenance, who hath too high a conceit of his beauty; and, wanting the benefit of a glass, he still stands in his own conceit; at last a limner is sent unto him, who draweth his ill-favoured face to the life; now looking thereon, he begins to be convinced that he is not half so handsome as he thought he was. Coming sinner, thy temptations are these

painters; they have drawn out thy ill-favoured heart to the life, and have set it before thine eyes, and now thou seest how ill-favoured thou art. Hezekiah was a good man, yet when he lay sick, for aught I know, he had somewhat too good an opinion of his heart; and for aught I know also, the Lord might, upon his recovery, leave him to a temptation, that he might better know all that was in his heart. Compare Isaiah 38:1-3, with 2 Chronicles 32:31.

Alas! we are sinful out of measure, but see it not to be the full, until an hour of temptation comes. But when it comes, it doth as the painter doth, draweth out our heart to the life: yet the sight of what we are should not keep us from coming to Jesus Christ. There are two ways by which God lets a man into a sight of the naughtiness of his heart; one is, by the light of the Word and Spirit of God; and the other is, by the temptations of the devil. But, by the first, we see our naughtiness one way; and, by the second, another. By the light of the Word and Spirit of God, thou hast a sight of thy naughtiness; and by the light of the sun, thou hast a sight of the spots and defilements that are in thy house or raiment. Which light gives thee to see a necessity of cleansing, but maketh not the blemishes to spread more abominably. But when Satan comes, when he

tempts, he puts life and rage into our sins, and turns them, as it were, into so many devils within us. Now, like prisoners, they attempt to break through the prison of our body; they will attempt to get out at our eyes, mouth, ears, any ways, to the scandal of the gospel, and reproach of religion, to the darkening of our evidences, and damning of our souls.

But I shall say, as I said before, this hath ofttimes been the lot of God's people. And, "There hath no temptation overtaken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (1 Cor 10:13). See the Book of Job, the Book of Psalms, and that of the Lamentations. And remember further, that Christ himself was tempted to blaspheme, to worship the devil, and to murder himself, (Matt 4; Luke 4); temptations worse than which thou canst hardly be overtaken with. But he was sinless, that is true. And he is thy Saviour, and that is as true! Yea, it is as true also, that by his being tempted, he became the conqueror of the tempter, and a succourer of those that are tempted (Col 2:14,15; Heb 2:15; 4:15,16).

Quest. But what should be the reason that some that are coming to Christ should be so lamentably cast down and buffeted with

temptations?

Answ. It may be for several causes.

1. Some that are coming to Christ cannot be persuaded, until the temptation comes, that they are so vile as the Scripture saith they are. True, they see so much of their wretchedness as to drive them to Christ. But there is an over and above of wickedness which they see not. Peter little thought that he had had cursing, and swearing, and lying, and an inclination in his heart to deny his Master, before the temptation came; but when that indeed came upon him, then he found it there to his sorrow (John 13:36-38; Mark 14:36-40; 68-72).

2. Some that are coming to Jesus Christ are too much affected with their own graces, and too little taken with Christ's person; wherefore God, to take them off from doting upon their own jewels, and that they might look more to the person, undertaking, and merits of his Son, plunges them into the ditch by temptations. And this I take to be the meaning of Job, "If I wash myself," said he, "with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Job 9:30). Job had been a little too much tampering with his own graces, and setting his excellencies a little too high; as these texts make manifest: Job 33:8-13, 34:5-10,

35:2,3, 38:1,2, 40:105, 42:3-6. But by that the temptations were ended, you find him better taught.

Yea, God doth ofttimes, even for this thing, as it were, take our graces from us, and so leave us almost quite to ourselves and to the tempter, that we may learn not to love the picture more than the person of his Son. See how he dealt with them in the 16th of Ezekiel, and the second of Hosea.

3. Perhaps thou hast been given too much to judge thy brother, to condemn thy brother, because a poor tempted man. And God, to bring down the pride of thy heart, letteth the tempter loose upon thee, that thou also mayst feel thyself weak. For "pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov 16:18).

4. It may be thou hast dealt a little too roughly with those that God hath this way wounded, not considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. And therefore God hath suffered it to come unto thee (Gal 6:1).

5. It may be thou wast given to slumber and sleep, and therefore these temptations were sent to awake thee. You know that Peter's temptation came upon him after his sleeping; then, instead of watching and praying, then he denied, and denied, and denied his Master

(Matt 26).

6. It may be thou hast presumed too far, and stood too much in thine own strength, and therefore is a time of temptation come upon thee. This was also one cause why it came upon Peter —Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I. Ah! that is the way to be tempted indeed (John 13:36-38).

7. It may be God intends to make thee wise, to speak a word in season to others that are afflicted; and therefore he suffereth thee to be tempted. Christ was tempted that he might be able to succour them that are tempted (Heb 2:18).

8. It may be Satan hath dared God to suffer him to tempt thee; promising himself, that if he will but let him do it, thou wilt curse him to his face. Thus he obtained leave against Job; wherefore take heed, tempted soul, lest thou provest the devil's sayings true (Job 1:11).

9. It may be thy graces must be tried in the fire, that that rust that cleaveth to them may be taken away, and themselves proved, both before angels and devils, to be far better than of gold that perisheth; it may be also, that thy graces are to receive special praises, and honour, and glory, at the coming of the Lord Jesus to judgment, for all the exploits that thou hast acted by them against hell, and its

infernal crew, in the day of thy temptation (1 Peter 1:6,7).

10. It may be God would have others learn by thy sighs, groans, and complaints, under temptation, to beware of those sins for the sake of which thou art at present delivered to the tormentors.

But to conclude this, put the worst to the worst —and then things will be bad enough —suppose that thou art to this day without the grace of God, yet thou art but a miserable creature, a sinner, that hath need of a blessed Saviour; and the text presents thee with one as good and kind as heart can wish; who also for thy encouragement saith, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

[Application of Observation Second.]

To come, therefore, to a word of *application*. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ are ofttimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them? Then this teacheth us these things —

1. That faith and doubting may at the same time have their residence in the same soul. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt 14:31). He saith not, O thou of no faith! but, O thou of little faith! because he had a little faith in the midst of his many

doubts. The same is true even of many that are coming to Jesus Christ. They come, and fear they come not, and doubt they come not. When they look upon the promise, or a word of encouragement by faith, then they come; but when they look upon themselves, or the difficulties that lie before them, then they doubt. "Bid me come," said Peter; "Come," said Christ. So he went down out of the ship to go to Jesus, but his hap was to go to him upon the water; there was the trial. So it is with the poor desiring soul. Bid me come, says the sinner; Come, says Christ, and I will in no wise cast thee out. So he comes, but his hap is to come upon the water, upon drowning difficulties; if, therefore, the wind of temptations blow, the waves of doubts and fears will presently arise, and this coming sinner will begin to sink, if he has but little faith. But you shall find here in Peter's little faith, a twofold act; to wit, coming and crying. Little faith cannot come all the way without crying. So long as its holy boldness lasts, so long it can come with peace; but when it is so, it can come no further, it will go the rest of the way with crying. Peter went as far as his little faith would carry him: he also cried as far as his little faith would help, "Lord, save me, I perish!" And so with coming and crying he was kept from sinking, though he had but a

little faith. “Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

2. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ are ofttimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them? Then this shows us a reason of that dejection, and those castings down, that very often we perceive to be in them that are coming to Jesus Christ. Why, it is because they are afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them. The poor world they mock us, because we are a dejected people; I mean, because we are sometimes so: but they do not know the cause of our dejection. Could we be persuaded, even then, when we are dejected, that Jesus Christ would indeed receive us, it would make us fly over their heads, and would put more gladness into our hearts than in the time in which their corn, wine, and oil increases (Psa 4:6,7). But,

3. It is so, That they that are coming to Jesus Christ are ofttimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them. Then this shows that they that are coming to Jesus Christ are an awakened, sensible, considering people. For fear cometh from sense, and consideration of things. They are sensible of sin, sensible of the curse due thereto; they are also sensible of the glorious majesty of God, and of what a blessed,

blessed thing it is to be received of Jesus Christ. The glory of heaven, and the evil of sin, these things they consider, and are sensible of. "When I remember, I am afraid." "When I consider, I am afraid" (Job 21:6; 23:15).

These things dash their spirits, being awake and sensible. Were they dead, like other men, they would not be afflicted with fear as they are. For dead men fear not, feel not, care not, but the living and sensible man, he it is that is ofttimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive him. I say, the dead and senseless are not distressed. They presume; they are groundlessly confident. Who so bold as blind Bayard? These indeed should fear and be afraid, because they are not coming to Jesus Christ. O! the hell, the fire, the pit, the wrath of God, and torment of hell, that are prepared for poor neglecting sinners! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb 3:3). But they want sense of things, and so cannot fear.

4. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ are ofttimes heartily afraid that he will not receive them? Then this should teach old Christians to pity and pray for young comers. You know the heart of a stranger; for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt. You know the fears, and doubts, and terrors, that take hold of them; for that they

sometimes took hold of you. Wherefore pity them, pray for them, encourage them; they need all this: guilt hath overtaken them, fears of the wrath of God hath overtaken them. Perhaps they are within the sight of hell-fire; and the fear of going thither is burning hot within their hearts. You may know, how strangely Satan is suggesting his devilish doubts unto them, if possible he may sink and drown them with the multitude and weight of them. Old Christians, mend up the path for them, take the stumblingblocks out of the way; lest that which is feeble and weak be turned aside, but let it rather be healed (Heb 12).

[CHRIST WOULD HAVE COMERS NOT ONCE THINK THAT HE WILL CAST THEM OUT.]

OBSERVATION THIRD. —I come now to the next observation, and shall speak a little to that; to wit, That Jesus Christ would not have them, that in truth are coming to him, once think that he will cast them out.

The text is full of this: for he saith, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Now, if he saith, I will not, he would not have us think he will. This is yet further manifest by these considerations.

First, Christ Jesus did forbid even them that as yet were not coming to him, once to

think him such an one. “Do not think,” said he, “that I will accuse you to the Father” (John 5:45).

These, as I said, were such, that as yet were not coming to him. For he saith of them a little before, “And ye will not come to me;” for the respect they had to the honour of men kept them back. Yet, I say, Jesus Christ gives them to understand, that though he might justly reject them, yet he would not, but bids them not once to think that he would accuse them to the Father. Now, not to accuse, with Christ, is to plead for: for Christ in these things stands not neuter between the Father and sinners. So then, if Jesus Christ would not have them think, that yet will not come to him, that he will accuse them; then he would not that they should think so, that in truth are coming to him. “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Second, When the woman taken in adultery, even in the very act, was brought before Jesus Christ, he so carried it both by words and actions, that he evidently enough made it manifest, that condemning and casting out were such things, for the doing of which he came not into the world. Wherefore, when they had set her before him, and had laid to her charge her heinous fact, he stooped down, and

with his finger wrote upon the ground, as though he heard them not. Now what did he do by this his carriage, but testify plainly that he was not for receiving accusations against poor sinners, whoever accused by? And observe, though they continue asking, thinking at last to force him to condemn her; yet then he so answered, so that he drove all condemning persons from her. And then he adds, for her encouragement to come to him; "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more" (John 8:1-11).

Not but that he indeed abhorred the fact, but he would not condemn the woman for the sin, because that was not his office. He was not sent "into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). Now if Christ, though urged to it, would not condemn the guilty woman, though she was far at present from coming to him, he would not that they should once think that he will cast them out, that in truth are coming to him. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Third, Christ plainly bids the turning sinner come; and forbids him to entertain any such thought as that he will cast him out. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him

return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa 4:7). The Lord, by bidding the unrighteous forsake his thoughts, doth in special forbid, as I have said, viz., those thoughts that hinder the coming man in his progress to Jesus Christ, his unbelieving thoughts.

Therefore he bids him not only forsake his ways, but his thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." It is not enough to forsake one if thou wilt come to Jesus Christ; because the other will keep thee from him. Suppose a man forsakes his wicked ways, his debauched and filthy life; yet if these thoughts, that Jesus Christ will not receive him, be entertained and nourished in his heart; these thoughts will keep him from coming to Jesus Christ.

Sinner, coming sinner, art thou for coming to Jesus Christ? Yes, says the sinner. Forsake thy wicked ways then. So I do, says the sinner.

Why comest thou then so slowly? Because I am hindered. What hinders? Has God forbidden thee? No. Art thou not willing to come faster? Yes, yet I cannot. Well, prithee be plain with me, and tell me the reason and ground of thy discouragement. Why, says the sinner, though God forbids me not, and

though I am willing to come faster, yet there naturally ariseth this, and that, and the other thought in my heart, that hinders my speed to Jesus Christ. Sometimes I think I am not chosen; sometimes I think I am not called; sometimes I think I am come too late; and sometimes I think I know not what it is to come. Also one while I think I have no grace; and then again, that I cannot pray; and then again, I think that I am a very hypocrite. And these things keep me from coming to Jesus Christ.

Look ye now, did not I tell you so? There are thoughts yet remaining in the heart, even of those who have forsaken their wicked ways; and with those thoughts they are more plagued than with anything else; because they hinder their coming to Jesus Christ; for the sin of unbelief, which is the original of all these thoughts, is that which besets a coming sinner more easily, than doth his ways (Heb 12:1-4). But now, since Jesus Christ commands thee to forsake these thoughts, forsake them, coming sinner; and if thou forsake them not, thou transgressest the commands of Christ, and abidest thine own tormentor, and keepest thyself from establishment in grace. “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (Isa 7:9). Thus you see how Jesus Christ setteth

himself against such thoughts, that any way discourage the coming sinner; and thereby truly vindicates the doctrine we have in hand; to wit, that Jesus Christ would not have them, that in truth are coming to him, once think that he will cast them out. “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

[Reasons of Observation Third.]

I come now to the reasons of the observation.

1. If Jesus Christ should allow thee once to think that he will cast thee out, he must allow thee to think that he will falsify his word; for he hath said, “I will in no wise cast out.” But Christ would not that thou shouldst count him as one that will falsify his word; for he saith of himself, “I am the truth;” therefore he would not that any that in truth are coming to him, should once think that he will cast them out.

2. If Jesus Christ should allow the sinner that in truth is coming to him, once to think that he will cast him out, then he must allow, and so countenance the first appearance of unbelief; the which he counteth his greatest enemy, and against which he hast bent even his holy gospel. Therefore Jesus Christ would not that they that in truth are coming to him, should once think that he will cast them out.

See Matthew 14:31, 21:21, Mark 11:23, Luke 24:25.

3. If Jesus Christ should allow the coming sinner once to think that he will cast him out; then he must allow him to make a question,

Whether he is willing to receive his Father's gift; for the coming sinner is his Father's gift; as also says the text; but he testifieth, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Therefore Jesus Christ would not have him, that in truth is coming to him, once to think that he will cast him out.

4. If Jesus Christ should allow them once to think, that indeed are coming to him, that he will cast them out, he must allow them to think that he will despise and reject the drawing of his Father. For no man can come to him but whom the Father draweth. But it would be high blasphemy, and damnable wickedness once to imagine thus. Therefore, Jesus Christ would not have him that cometh once think that he will cast him out.

5. If Jesus Christ should allow those that indeed are coming to him, once to think that he will cast them out, he must allow them to think that he will be unfaithful to the trust and charge that his Father hath committed to him; which is to save, and not to lose anything of

that which he hath given unto him to save (John 6:39). But the Father hath given him a charge to save the coming sinner; therefore it cannot be, that he should allow, that such an one should once think that he will cast him out.

6. If Jesus Christ should allow that they should once think that are coming to him, that he will cast them out, then he must allow them to think that he will be unfaithful to his office of priesthood; for, as by the first part of it, he paid price for, and ransomed souls, so by the second part thereof, he continually maketh intercession to God for them that come (Heb 7:25). But he cannot allow us to question his faithful execution of his priesthood. Therefore he cannot allow us once to think that the coming sinner shall be cast out.

7. If Jesus Christ should allow us once to think that the coming sinner shall be cast out, then he must allow us to question his will, or power, or merit to save. But he cannot allow us once to question any of these; therefore not once to think, that the coming sinner shall be cast out. (1.) He cannot allow them to question his will; for he saith in the text, "I WILL in no wise cast out." (2.) He cannot allow us to question his power; for the Holy Ghost saith HE IS ABLE to save to the uttermost them that

come. (3.) He cannot allow them to question the efficacy of his merit; for the blood of Christ cleanseth the comer from all sin, (1 John 1:7), therefore he cannot allow that he that is coming to him should once think that he will cast them out.

8. If Jesus Christ should allow the coming sinner once to think that he will cast him out, he must allow him to give the lie to the manifest testimony of the Father, Son, and Spirit; yea, to the whole gospel contained in Moses, the prophets, the book of Psalms, and that commonly called the New Testament. But he cannot allow of this; therefore, not that the coming sinner should once think that he will cast him out.

9. Lastly, If Jesus Christ should allow him that is coming to him, once to think that he will cast him out, he must allow him to question his Father's oath, which he in truth and righteousness hath taken, that they might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ. But he cannot allow this; therefore he cannot allow that the coming sinner should once think that he will cast him out (Heb 6).

[USE AND APPLICATION.]

I come now to make some GENERAL USE AND APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE, and so to draw towards a conclusion.

USE FIRST: Information.

The first use —A USE OF INFORMATION; and,

First, It informeth us *that men by nature are far off from Christ*. Let me a little improve this use, by speaking to these three questions. 1. Where is he that is coming [but has not come], to Jesus Christ? 2. What is he that is not coming to Jesus Christ? 3. Whither is he to go that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

1. Where is he?

[Answ.] (1.) He is far from God, he is without him, even alienate from him both in his understanding, will, affections, judgment, and conscience (Eph 2:12; 4:18). (2.) He is far from Jesus Christ, who is the only deliverer of men from hell fire (Psa 73:27). (3.) He is far from the work of the Holy Ghost, the work of regeneration, and a second creation, without which no man shall see the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3). (4.) He is far more righteous,[19]

[19] How awful is the confidence of the self-righteous pharisee; he considers himself *more* righteous than the

from that righteousness that should make him acceptable in God's sight (Isa 46:12,13). (5.) He is under the power and dominion of sin; sin reigneth in and over him; it dwelleth in every faculty of his soul, and member of his body; so that from head to foot there is no place clean (Isa 1:6; Rom 3:9-18). (6.) He is in the pest-house with Uzziah and excluded the camp of Israel with the lepers (2 Chron 26:21; Num 5:2; Job 36:14). (7.) His "life *is* among the unclean." He is "in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:28). (8.) He is "in sin," "in the flesh," "in death," "in the snare of the devil," and is "taken captive by him at his will" (1 Cor 15:17; Rom 8:8; 1 John 3:14; 2 Tim 2:26). (9.) He is under the curse of the law, and the devil dwells in him, and hath the mastery of him (Gal 3:13; Eph 2:2,3; Acts 26:18). (10.) He is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knows not whither he goes; for darkness has blinded his eyes. (11.) He is in the broad way that leadeth to destruction; and holding on, he will assuredly go in at the broad gate, and so

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poor penitent, who is clothed in Christ's righteousness, the garments of salvation.

The self-righteous says: —"Stand by, I am holier than thou. Thank God, I am not like this publican." While in God's sight, poor wretched boaster, thou art clothed in filthy rags. —Ed.

down the stairs to hell.

2. What is he that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

[Answ.] (1.) He is counted one of God's enemies (Luke 19:14; Rom 8:7). (2.) He is a child of the devil, and of hell; for the devil begat him, as to his sinful nature, and hell must swallow him at last, because he cometh not to Jesus Christ (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Matt 23:15; Psa 9:17). (3.) He is a child of wrath, an heir of it; it is his portion, and God will repay it him to his face (Eph 2:1-3; Job 21:29-31). (4.) He is a self-murderer; he wrongeth his own soul, and is one that loveth death (Prov 1:18; 8:36). (5.) He is a companion for devils and damned men (Prov 21:16; Matt 25:41).

3. Whither is he like to go that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

[Answ.] (1.) He that cometh not to him, is like to go further from him; so every sin is a step further from Jesus Christ (Hosea 11). (2.) As he is in darkness, so he is like to go on in it; for Christ is the light of the world, and he that comes not to him, walketh in darkness (John 8:12). (3.) He is like to be removed at last as far from God, and Christ, and heaven, and all felicity, as an infinite God can remove him (Matt 12:41). But,

Second, This doctrine of coming to Christ

informeth us *where poor destitute sinners may find life for their souls*, and that is in Christ. This life is in his Son; he that hath the Son, hath life. And again, "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (Prov 8:35). Now, for further enlargement, I will also here propound three more questions: 1. What life is in Christ? 2. Who may have it? 3. Upon what terms?

1. What life is in Jesus Christ?

[Answ.] (1.) There is justifying life in Christ. Man by sin is dead in law; and Christ only can deliver him by his righteousness and blood from this death into a state of life. "For God sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). That is, through the righteousness which he should accomplish, and the death that he should die. (2.) There is eternal life in Christ; life that is endless; life for ever and ever. "He hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5:11). Now, justification and eternal salvation being both in Christ, and nowhere else to be had for men, who would not come to Jesus Christ?

2. Who may have this life?

I answer, Poor, helpless, miserable sinners. Particularly, (1.) Such as are willing to have it. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life" (Rev 22:17). (2.) He that thirsteth for it. "I will

give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life" (Rev 21:6). (3.) He that is weary of his sins. "This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing" (Isa 28:12). (4.) He that is poor and needy. "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy" (Psa 72:13). (5.) He that followeth after him, crieth for life. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

3. Upon what terms may he have this life?

[Answ.] Freely. Sinner, dost thou hear. Thou mayest have it freely. Let him take the water of life freely. I will give him of the fountain of the water of life freely. "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both" (Luke 7:42). Freely, without money, or without price. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa 55:1). Sinner, art thou thirsty? art thou weary? art thou willing? Come, then, and regard not your stuff; for all the good that is in Christ is offered to the coming sinner, without money and without price. He has life to give away to such as want it, and that hath not a penny to purchase it; and he will give it freely.

Oh what a blessed condition is the coming sinner in! But,

Third, This doctrine of coming to Jesus Christ for life, informeth us, *that it is to be had nowhere else*. Might it be had anywhere else, the text, and him that spoke it, would be but little set by; for what greater matter is there in "I will in no wise cast out," if another stood by that could receive them? But here appears the glory of Christ, that none but he can save. And here appears his love, that though none can save but he, yet he is not coy in saving. "But him that comes to me," says he, "I will in no wise cast out."

That none can save but Jesus Christ, is evident from Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other;" and "he hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5:11). If life could have been had anywhere else, it should have been in the law. But it is not in the law; for by the deeds of the law, no man living shall be justified; and if not justified, then no life. Therefore life is nowhere to be had but in Jesus Christ (Gal 3).

[Quest.] But why would God so order it, that life should be had nowhere else but in Jesus Christ?

[Answ.] There is reason for it, and that both with respect to God and us.

1. With respect to God.

(1.) That it might be in a way of justice as well as mercy. And in a way of justice it could not have been, if it had not been by Christ; because he, and he only, was able to answer the demand of the law, and give for sin what the justice thereof required. All angels had been crushed down to hell for ever, had that curse been laid upon them for our sins, which was laid upon Jesus Christ; but it was laid upon him, and he bare it; and answered the penalty, and redeemed his people from under it, with that satisfaction to Divine justice that God himself doth now proclaim, That he is faithful and just to forgive us, if by faith we shall venture to Jesus, and trust to what he has done for life (Rom 3:24-26; John 1:4). (2.) Life must be by Jesus Christ, that God might be adored and magnified, for finding out this way. This is the Lord's doings, that in all things he might be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord. (3.) It must be by Jesus Christ, that life might be at God's dispose, who hath great pity for the poor, the lowly, the meek, the broken in heart, and for them that others care not for (Psa 34:6; 138:6; 25; 51:17; 147:3). (4.) Life must be in Christ, to cut off boasting from the lips of men. This also is the apostle's reason in Romans 3:19,27 (Eph 2:8-10).

2. Life must be in Jesus Christ with respect to us.

(1.) That we might have it upon the easiest terms, to wit, freely: as a gift, not as wages. Was it in Moses' hand, we should come hardly at it. Was it in the pope's hand, we should pay soundly for it.[20] But thanks be to God, it is in Christ, laid up in him, and by him to be communicated to sinners upon easy terms, even for receiving, accepting, and embracing with thanksgiving; as the Scriptures plainly declare (John 1:11,12; 2 Cor 11:4; Heb 11:13; Col 3:13-15). (2.) Life is in Christ FOR US, that it might not be upon so brittle a foundation, as indeed it would had it been anywhere else. The law itself is weak because of us, as to this. But Christ is a tried stone, a sure foundation, one that will not fail to bear thy burden, and to receive thy soul, coming sinner. (3.) Life is in Christ, that it might be sure to all the seed. Alas! the best of us, was life left in our hand, to be sure we should forfeit it, over, and over, and over; or, was it in any other hand, we should, by our often backslidings, so offend him, that at last he would shut up his bowels in

[20] This nation now pays some eight or ten millions sterling a year. Had God sanctioned this diabolical trade in souls, all Christendom would have been divided into two classes-priests and slaves. —Ed.

everlasting displeasure against us. But now it is in Christ, it is with one that can pity, pray for, pardon, yea, multiply pardons; it is with one that can have compassion upon us, when we are out of the way; with one that hath an heart to fetch us again, when we are gone astray; with one that can pardon without upbraiding. Blessed be God, that life is in Christ! For now it is sure to all the seed. But,

Fourth, This doctrine of coming to Jesus Christ for life informs us *of the evil of unbelief*; that wicked thing that is the only or chief hindrance to the coming sinner. Doth the text say, "Come?" Doth it say, "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out?" Then what an evil is that that keepeth sinners from coming to Jesus Christ! And that evil is unbelief: for by faith we come; by unbelief we keep away. Therefore it is said to be that by which a soul is said to depart from God; because it was that which at first caused the world to go off from him, and that also that keeps them from him to this day. And it doth it the more easily, because it doth it with a wile.

[*Of the Sin of Unbelief*.] —This sin may be called *the white devil*, for it oftentimes, in its mischievous doings in the soul, shows as if it was an angel of light: yea, it acteth like a counsellor of heaven. Therefore a little to

discourse of this evil disease.

1. It is that sin, above all others, that hath some show of reason in its attempts. For it keeps the soul from Christ by pretending its present unfitness and unpreparedness; as want of more sense of sin, want of more repentance, want of more humility, want of a more broken heart.

2. It is the sin that most suiteth with the conscience: the conscience of the coming sinner tells him that he hath nothing good; that he stands inditeable for ten thousand talents; that he is a very ignorant, blind, and hard-hearted sinner, unworthy to be once taken notice of by Jesus Christ. And will you, says Unbelief, in such a case as you now are, presume to come to Jesus Christ?

3. It is the sin that most suiteth with our sense of feeling. The coming sinner feels the workings of sin, of all manner of sin and wretchedness in his flesh; he also feels the wrath and judgment of God due to sin, and ofttimes staggers under it. Now, says Unbelief, you may see you have no grace; for that which works in you is corruption. You may also perceive that God doth not love you, because the sense of his wrath abides upon you. Therefore, how can you bear the face to come to Jesus Christ?

4. It is that sin, above all others, that most suiteth with the wisdom of our flesh. The wisdom of our flesh thinks it prudent to question awhile, to stand back awhile, to hearken to both sides awhile; and not to be rash, sudden, or unadvised, in too bold a presuming upon Jesus Christ. And this wisdom unbelief falls in with.

5. It is that sin, above all other, that continually is whispering the soul in the ear with mistrusts of the faithfulness of God, in keeping promise to them that come to Jesus Christ for life. It also suggests mistrust about Christ's willingness to receive it, and save it. And no sin can do this so artificially as unbelief.

6. It is also that sin which is always at hand to enter an objection against this or that promise that by the Spirit of God is brought to our heart to comfort us; and if the poor coming sinner is not aware of it, it will, by some evasion, slight, trick, or cavil, quickly wrest from him the promise again, and he shall have but little benefit of it.

7. It is that, above all other sins, that weakness our prayers, our faith, our love, our diligence, our hope, and expectations: it even taketh the heart away from God in duty.

8. Lastly, This sin, as I have said even now,

it appeareth in the soul with so many sweet pretences to safety and security, that it is, as it were, counsel sent from heaven; bidding the soul be wise, wary, considerate, well-advised, and to take heed of too rash a venture upon believing. Be sure, first, that God loves you; take hold of no promise until you are forced by God unto it; neither be you sure of your salvation; doubt it still, though the testimony of the Lord has been often confirmed in you. Live not by faith, but by sense; and when you can neither see nor feel, then fear and mistrust, then doubt and question all. This is the devilish counsel of unbelief, which is so covered over with specious pretences, that the wisest Christian can hardly shake off these reasonings.

[*Qualities of unbelief as opposed to faith*.] —But to be brief. Let me here give thee, Christian reader, a more particular description of the qualities of unbelief, by opposing faith unto it, in these twenty-five particulars: —

1. Faith believeth the Word of God; but unbelief questioneth the certainty of the same (Psa 106:24).

2. Faith believeth the Word, because it is true; but unbelief doubteth thereof, because it is true (1 Tim 4:3; John 8:45).

3. Faith sees more in a promise of God to

help, than in all other things to hinder; but unbelief, notwithstanding God's promise, saith, How can these things be? (Rom 4:19-21; 2 Kings 7:2; John 3:11,12).

4. Faith will make thee see love in the heart of Christ, when with his mouth he giveth reproofs; but unbelief will imagine wrath in his heart, when with his mouth and Word he saith he loves us (Matt 15:22,28; Num 13; 2 Chron 14:3).

5. Faith will help the soul to wait, though God defers to give; but unbelief will take huff and throw up all, if God makes any tarrying (Psa 25:5; Isa 8:17; 2 Kings 6:33; Psa 106:13,14).

6. Faith will give comfort in the midst of fears; but unbelief causeth fears in the midst of comfort (2 Chron 20:20,21; Matt 8:26; Luke 24:26,27).

7. Faith will suck sweetness out of God's rod; but unbelief can find no comfort in his greatest mercies (Psa 23:4; Num 21).

8. Faith maketh great burdens light; but unbelief maketh light ones intolerably heavy (2 Cor 4:1; 14-18; Mal 1:12,13).

9. Faith helpeth us when we are down; but unbelief throws us down when we are up (Micah 7:8-10; Heb 4:11).

10. Faith bringeth us near to God when we

are far from him; but unbelief puts us far from God when we are near to him (Heb 10:22; 3:12,13).

11. Where faith reigns, it declareth men to be the friends of God; but where unbelief reigns, it declareth them to be his enemies (John 3:23; Heb 3:18; Rev 21:8).

12. Faith putteth a man under grace; but unbelief holdeth him under wrath (Rom 3:24-26; 14:6; Eph 2:8; John 3:36; 1 John 5:10; Heb 3:17; Mark 16:16).

13. Faith purifieth the heart; but unbelief keepeth it polluted and impure (Acts 15:9; Titus 1:15,16).

14. By faith, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us; but by unbelief, we are shut up under the law to perish (Rom 4:23,24; 11:32; Gal 3:23).

15. Faith maketh our work acceptable to God through Christ; but whatsoever is of unbelief is sin. For without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb 11:4; Rom 14:23; Heb 6:6).

16. Faith giveth us peace and comfort in our souls; but unbelief worketh trouble and tossings, like the restless waves of the sea (Rom 5:1; James 1:6).

17. Faith maketh us to see preciousness in Christ; but unbelief sees no form, beauty, or

comeliness in him (1 Peter 2:7; Isa 53:2,3).

18. By faith we have our life in Christ's fullness; but by unbelief we starve and pine away (Gal 2:20).

19. Faith gives us the victory over the law, sin, death, the devil, and all evils; but unbelief layeth us obnoxious to them all (1 John 5:4,5; Luke 12:46).

20. Faith will show us more excellency in things not seen, than in them that are; but unbelief sees more in things that are seen, than in things that will be hereafter;. (2 Cor 4:18; Heb 11:24-27; 1 Cor 15:32).

21. Faith makes the ways of God pleasant and admirable; but unbelief makes them heavy and hard (Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 12:10,11; John 6:60; Psa 2:3).

22. By faith Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob possessed the land of promise; but because of unbelief, neither Aaron, nor Moses, nor Miriam could get thither (Heb 11:9; 3:19).

23. By faith the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea; but by unbelief the generality of them perished in the wilderness (Heb 11:29; Jude 5).

24. By faith Gideon did more with three hundred men, and a few empty pitchers, than all the twelve tribes could do, because they believed not God (Judg 7:16-22; Num

14:11,14).

25. By faith Peter walked on the water; but by unbelief he began to sink (Matt 14:28-30).

Thus might many more be added, which, for brevity's sake, I omit; beseeching every one that thinketh he hath a soul to save, or be damned, to take heed of unbelief; lest, seeing there is a promise left us of entering into his rest, any of us by unbelief should indeed come short of it.

USE SECOND. Examination.

The second use —A USE OF EXAMINATION.

We come now to a use of examination. Sinner, thou hast heard of the necessity of coming to Christ; also of the willingness of Christ to receive the coming soul; together with the benefit that they by him shall have that indeed come to him. Put thyself now upon this serious inquiry, Am I indeed come to Jesus Christ?

Motives plenty I might here urge, to prevail with thee to a conscientious performance of this duty. As, 1. Thou art in sin, in the flesh, in death, in the snare of the devil, and under the curse of the law, if you are not coming to Jesus Christ. 2. There is no way to be delivered from these, but by coming to Jesus Christ. 3. If thou

comest, Jesus Christ will receive thee, and will in no wise cast thee out. 4. Thou wilt not repent it in the day of judgment, if now thou comest to Jesus Christ. 5. But thou wilt surely mourn at last, if now thou shalt refuse to come. 6. And lastly, Now thou hast been invited to come; now will thy judgment be greater, and thy damnation more fearful, if thou shalt yet refuse, than if thou hadst never heard of coming to Christ.

Object. But we hope we are come to Jesus Christ.

Answ. It is well if it proves so. But lest thou shouldst speak without ground, and so fall unawares into hell-fire, let us examine a little.

First, Art thou indeed come to Jesus Christ? *What hast thou left behind thee? What didst thou come away from, in thy coming to Jesus Christ?*

When Lot came out of Sodom, he left the Sodomites behind him (Gen 19). When Abraham came out of Chaldea, he left his country and kindred behind him (Gen 12; Acts 7). When Ruth came to put her trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel, she left her father and mother, her gods, and the land of her nativity, behind her (Ruth 1:15-17; 2:11,12). When Peter came to Christ, he left his nets behind him (Matt 4:20). When Zaccheus

came to Christ, he left the receipt of custom behind him (Luke 19). When Paul came to Christ, he left his own righteousness behind him (Phil 3:7,8). When those that used curious arts came to Jesus Christ, they took their curious books and burned them; though, in another man's eye, they were counted worth fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19:18-20).

What sayest thou, man? Hast thou left thy darling sins, thy Sodomitish pleasures, thy acquaintance and vain companions, thy unlawful gain, thy idol-gods, thy righteousness, and thy unlawful curious arts, behind thee? If any of these be with thee, and thou with them, in thy heart and life, thou art not yet come to Jesus Christ.

Second, Art thou come to Jesus Christ? *Prithee tell me what moved thee to come to Jesus Christ?*

Men do not usually come or go to this or that place, before they have a moving cause, or rather a cause moving them thereto. No more do they come to Jesus Christ —I do not say, before they have a cause, but —before that cause moveth them to come. What sayest thou? Hast thou a cause moving thee to come? To be at present in a state of condemnation, is cause sufficient for men to come to Jesus Christ for life. But that will not do, except the cause

move them; the which it will never do, until their eyes be opened to see themselves in that condition. For it is not a man's being under wrath, but his seeing it, that moveth him to come to Jesus Christ. Alas! all men by sin are under wrath; yet but few of that all come to Jesus Christ. And the reason is, because they do not see their condition. "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt 3:7). Until men are warned, and also receive the warning, they will not come to Jesus Christ.

Take three or four instances for this. Adam and Eve came not to Jesus Christ until they received the alarm, the conviction of their undone state by sin. (Gen 3) The children of Israel cried not out for a mediator before they saw themselves in danger of death by the law (Exo 20:18,19). Before the publican came, he saw himself lost and undone (Luke 18:13). The prodigal came not, until he saw death at the door, ready to devour him (Luke 15:17,18). The three thousand came not, until they knew not what to do to be saved (Acts 2:37-39). Paul came not, until he saw himself lost and undone (Acts 9:3-8,11). Lastly, Before the jailer came, he saw himself undone (Acts 16:29-31). And I tell thee, it is an easier thing to persuade a well man to go to the physician for cure, or a man without hurt to seek for a plaster to cure him,

than it is to persuade a man that sees not his soul-disease, to come to Jesus Christ. The whole have no need of the physician; then why should they go to him? The full pitcher can hold no more; then why should it go to the fountain? And if thou comest full, thou comest not aright; and be sure Christ will send thee empty away. "But he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Mark 2:17; Psa 147:3; Luke 1:53).

Third, Art thou coming to Jesus Christ? *Prithee tell me, What seest thou in him to allure thee to forsake all the world, to come to him?*

I say, What hast thou seen in him? Men must see something in Jesus Christ, else they will not come to him. 1. What comeliness hast thou seen in his person? thou comest not, if thou seest no form nor comeliness in him (Isa 53:1-3). 2. Until those mentioned in the Song were convinced that there was more beauty, comeliness, and desirableness in Christ, than in ten thousand, they did not so much as ask where he was, nor incline to turn aside after him (Song 5, 6).

There be many things on this side heaven that can and do carry away the heart; and so will do, so long as thou livest, if thou shalt be kept blind, and not be admitted to see the

beauty of the Lord Jesus.

Fourth, Art thou come to the Lord Jesus? *What hast thou found in him, since thou camest to him?*

Peter found with him the word of eternal life (John 6:68). They that Peter makes mention of, found him a living stone, even such a living stone as communicated life to them (1 Peter 2:4,5). He saith himself, they that come to him, &c., shall find rest unto their souls; hast thou found rest in him for thy soul? (Matt 11:28).

Let us go back to the times of the Old Testament.

1. Abraham found THAT in him, that made him leave his country for him, and become for his sake a pilgrim and stranger in the earth (Gen 12; Heb 11).

2. Moses found THAT in him, that made him forsake a crown, and a kingdom for him too.

3. David found so much in him, that he counted to be in his house one day was better than a thousand; yea, to be a door-keeper therein was better, in his esteem, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness (Psa 84:10).

4. What did Daniel and the three children find in him, to make them run the hazards of the fiery furnace, and the den of lions, for his

sake? (Dan 3, 6).

Let us come down to martyrs.

1. Stephen found that in him that made him joyful, and quietly yield up his life for his name (Acts 7).

2. Ignatius found that in Christ that made him choose to go through the torments of the devil, and hell itself, rather than not to have him. —Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, vol. 1, p. 52, Anno. 111. Edit. 1632.

3. What saw Romanus in Christ, when he said to the raging Emperor, who threatened him with fearful torments, Thy sentence, O Emperor, I joyfully embrace, and refuse not to be sacrificed by as cruel torments as thou canst invent? —Fox, vol. 1, p. 116.

4. What saw Menas, the Egyptian, in Christ, when he said, under most cruel torments, There is nothing in my mind that can be compared to the kingdom of heaven; neither is all the world, if it was weighed in a balance, to be preferred with the price of one soul? Who is able to separate us from the love of Jesus Christ our Lord? And I have learned of my Lord and King not to fear them that kill the body, &c. P. 117.

5. What did Eulalia see in Christ, when she said, as they were pulling her one joint from another, Behold, O Lord, I will not forget thee.

What a pleasure it is for them, O Christ! that remember thy triumphant victory? P. 121.

6. What think you did Agnes see in Christ, when rejoicingly she went to meet the soldier that was appointed to be her executioner. I will willingly, said she, receive into my paps the length of this sword, and into my breast will draw the force thereof, even to the hilts; that thus I, being married to Christ my spouse, may surmount and escape all the darkness of this world? P. 122.

7. What do you think did Julitta see in Christ, when, at the Emperor's telling of her, that except she would worship the gods, she should never have protection, laws, judgments, nor life, she replied, Farewell life, welcome death; farewell riches, welcome poverty: all that I have, if it were a thousand times more, would I rather lose, than to speak one wicked and blasphemous word against my Creator? P. 123.

8. What did Marcus Arethusius see in Christ, when after his enemies had cut his flesh, anointed it with honey, and hanged him up in a basket for flies and bees to feed on, he would not give, to uphold idolatry, one halfpenny to save his life? P. 128.

9. What did Constantine see in Christ, when he used to kiss the wounds of them that

suffered for him? P. 135.

10. But what need I give thus particular instances of words and smaller actions, when by their lives, their blood, their enduring hunger, sword, fire, pulling asunder, and all torments that the devil and hell could devise, for the love they bare to Christ, after they were come to him?

What hast THOU *found in him, sinner?*

What! come to Christ, and find nothing in him! —when all things that are worth looking after are in him! —or if anything, yet not enough to wean thee from thy sinful delights, and fleshly lusts! Away, away, thou art not coming to Jesus Christ.

He that has come to Jesus Christ, hath found in him, that, as I said, that is not to be found anywhere else. As,

1. He that is come to Christ hath found God in him reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. And so God is not to be found in heaven and earth besides (2 Cor 5:19,20).

2. He that is come to Jesus Christ hath found in him a fountain of grace, sufficient, not only to pardon sin, but to sanctify the soul, and to preserve it from falling, in this evil world.

3. He that is come to Jesus Christ hath

found virtue in him; THAT virtue, that if he does but touch thee with his Word, or thou him by faith, life is forthwith conveyed into thy soul. It makes thee wake as one that is waked out of his sleep; it awakes all the powers of the soul (Psa 30:11,12; Song 6:12).

4. Art thou come to Jesus Christ? Thou hast found glory in him, glory that surmounts and goes beyond. "Thou *art* more glorious - than the mountains of prey" (Psa 76:4).

5. What shall I say? Thou hast found righteousness in him; thou hast found rest, peace, delight, heaven, glory, and eternal life.

Sinner, be advised; ask thy heart again, saying, Am I come to Jesus Christ? For upon this one question, Am I come, or, am I not? hangs heaven and hell as to thee. If thou canst say, I am come, and God shall approve that saying, happy, happy, happy man art thou! But if thou art not come, what can make thee happy? yea, what can make that man happy that, for his not coming to Jesus Christ for life, must be damned in hell?

USE THIRD: Encouragement.

The third use —A USE OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

Coming sinner, I have now a word for thee; be of good comfort, "He will in no wise cast

out." Of all men, thou art the blessed of the Lord; the Father hath prepared his Son to be a sacrifice for thee, and Jesus Christ, thy Lord, is gone to prepare a place for thee (John 1:29; Heb 10). What shall I say to thee?

[*First*,] *Thou comest to a* FULL *Christ*; thou canst not want anything for soul or body, for this world or that to come, but it is to be had in or by Jesus Christ. As it is said of the land that the Danites went to possess, so, and with much more truth, it may be said of Christ; he is such an one with whom there is no want of any good thing that is in heaven or earth. A full Christ is thy Christ.

1. He is full of grace. Grace is sometimes taken for love; never any loved like Jesus Christ. Jonathan's love went beyond the love of women; but the love of Christ passes knowledge. It is beyond the love of all the earth, of all creatures, even of men and angels. His love prevailed with him to lay aside his glory, to leave the heavenly place, to clothe himself with flesh, to be born in a stable, to be laid in a manger, to live a poor life in the world, to take upon him our sicknesses, infirmities, sins, curse, death, and the wrath that was due to man. And all this he did for a base, undeserving, unthankful people; yea, for a people that was at enmity with him. "For when we were yet

without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom 5:6-10).

2. He is full of truth. Full of grace and truth. Truth, that is, faithfulness in keeping promise, even this of the text, with all other, "I will in no wise cast out" (John 14:6). Hence it is said, that his words be true, and that he is the faithful God, that keepeth covenant. And hence it is also that his promises are called truth: "Thou wilt fulfil thy truth unto Jacob, and thy mercy unto Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." Therefore it is said again, that both himself and words are truth: "I am the truth, the Scripture of truth" (Dan 10:21). "Thy word is truth," (John 17:17; 2 Sam 7:28); "thy law is truth," (Psa 119:142); and "my mouth," saith he, "shall speak truth," (Prov 8:7); see also Ecclesiastes 12:10, Isaiah 25:1, Malachi 2:6, Acts 26:25, 2

Timothy 2:12,13. Now, I say, his word is truth, and he is full of truth to fulfil his truth, even to a thousand generations. Coming sinner, he will not deceive thee; come boldly to Jesus Christ.

3. He is full of wisdom. He is made unto us of God wisdom; wisdom to manage the affairs of his church in general, and the affairs of every coming sinner in particular. And upon this account he is said to be "head over all things," (1 Cor 1; Eph 1), because he manages all things that are in the world by his wisdom, for the good of his church; all men's actions, all Satan's temptations, all God's providences, all crosses, and disappointments; all things whatever are under the hand of Christ —who is the wisdom of God —and he ordereth them all for good to his church. And can Christ help it —and be sure he can —nothing shall happen or fall out in the world, but it shall, in despite of all opposition, have a good tendency to his church and people.

4. He is full of the Spirit, to communicate it to the coming sinner; he hath therefore received it without measure, that he may communicate it to every member of his body, according as every man's measure thereof is allotted him by the Father. Wherefore he saith, that he that comes to him, "Out of his belly

shall flow rivers of living water" (John 3:34; Titus 3:5,6; Acts 2; John 7:33-39).

5. He is indeed a storehouse full of all the graces of the Spirit. "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). Here is more faith, more love, more sincerity, more humility, more of every grace; and of this, even more of this, he giveth to every lowly, humble, penitent coming sinner. Wherefore, coming soul, thou comest not to a barren wilderness when thou comest to Jesus Christ.

6. He is full of bowels and compassion: and they shall feel and find it so that come to him for life. He can bear with thy weaknesses, he can pity thy ignorance, he can be touched with the feeling of thy infirmities, he can affectionately forgive they transgressions, he can heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely. His compassions fail not; "and he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; he can pity them that no eye pities, and be afflicted in all thy afflictions" (Matt 26:41; Heb 5:2; 2:18; Matt 9:2; Hosea 14:4; Eze 16:5,6; Isa 63:9; Psa 78:38; 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; Lam 3:22; Isa 42:3).

7. Coming soul, the Jesus that thou art coming to, is full of might and terribleness for thy advantage; he can suppress all thine enemies; he is the Prince of the kings of the

earth; he can bow all men's designs for thy help; he can break all snares laid for thee in the way; he can lift thee out of all difficulties wherewith thou mayest be surrounded; he is wise in heart, and mighty in power. Every life under heaven is in his hand; yea, the fallen angels tremble before him. And he will save thy life, coming sinner (1 Cor 1:24; Rom 8:28; Matt 28:18; Rev 4; Psa 19:3; 27:5,6; Job 9:4; John 17:2; Matt 8:29; Luke 8:28; James 2:19).

8. Coming sinner, the Jesus to whom thou art coming is lowly in heart, he despiseth not any. It is not thy outward meanness, nor thy inward weakness; it is not because thou art poor, or base, or deformed, or a fool, that he will despise thee: he hath chosen the foolish, the base, and despised things of this world, to confound the wise and mighty. He will bow his ear to thy stammering prayers he will pick out the meaning of thy inexpressible groans; he will respect thy weakest offering, if there be in it but thy heart (Matt 11:20; Luke 14:21; Prov 9:4-6; Isa 38:14,15; Song 5:15; John 4:27; Mark 12:33,34; James 5:11). Now, is not this a blessed Christ, coming sinner? Art thou not like to fare well, when thou hast embraced him, coming sinner? But,

Second. Thou hast yet another advantage by Jesus Christ, thou art coming to him, for he

is not only full, BUT FREE. He is not sparing of what he has; he is open-hearted and open-handed. Let me in a few particulars show thee this:

1. This is evident, because he calls thee; he calls upon thee to come unto him; the which he would not do, was he not free to give; yea, he bids thee, when come, ask, seek, knock. And for thy encouragement, adds to every command a promise, "Seek, and ye shall find; ask, and ye shall have; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." If the rich man should say thus to the poor, would not he be reckoned a free-hearted man? I say, should he say to the poor, Come to my door, ask at my door, knock at my door, and you shall find and have; would he not be counted liberal? Why, thus doth Jesus Christ. Mind it, coming sinner (Isa 55:3; Psa 50:15; Matt 7:7-9).

2. He doth not only bid thee come, but tells thee, he will heartily do thee good; yea, he will do it with rejoicing; "I will rejoice over them, to do them good - with my whole heart, and with my whole soul" (Jer 32:41).

3. It appeareth that he is free, because he giveth without twitting.[21] "He giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1, 5).

[21] "Twitting;" taunting, or rebuking. —Ed.

There are some that will not deny to do the poor a pleasure, but they will mix their mercies with so many *twits*, that the persons on whom they bestow their charity shall find but little sweetness in it. But Christ doth not do so, coming sinner; he casteth all thine iniquities behind his back (Isa 38:17). Thy sins and iniquities he will remember no more (Heb 8:12).

4. That Christ is free, is manifest by the complaints that he makes against them that will not come to him for mercy. I say, he complains, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!" (Matt 23:37). I say, he speaks it by way of complaint. He saith also in another place, "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob" (Isa 43:22). Coming sinner, see here the willingness of Christ to save; see here how free he is to communicate life, and all good things, to such as thou art. He complains, if thou comest not; he is displeased, if thou callest not upon him. Hark, coming sinner, once again; when Jerusalem would not come to him for safeguard, "he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which *belong* unto

thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:41,42).

5. Lastly, He is open and free-hearted to do thee good, as is seen by the joy and rejoicing that he manifesteth at the coming home of poor prodigals. He receives the lost sheep with rejoicing; the lost goat with rejoicing; yea, when the prodigal came home, what joy and mirth, what music and dancing, was in his father's house! (Luke 15).

Third. Coming sinner, *I will add another encouragement for thy help.*

1. God hath prepared a mercy-seat, a throne of grace to sit on; that thou mayest come thither to him, and that he may from thence hear thee, and receive thee. "I will commune with thee," saith he, "from above the mercy-seat" (Exo 25:22). As who shall say, sinner, When thou comest to me, thou shalt find me upon the mercy-seat, where also I am always found of the undone coming sinner. Thither I bring my pardons; there I hear and receive their petitions, and accept them to my favour.

2. God hath also prepared a golden altar for thee to offer thy prayers and tears upon. A golden altar! It is called a "golden altar," to show what worth it is of in God's account: for this golden altar is Jesus Christ; this altar

sanctifies thy gift, and makes thy sacrifice acceptable. This altar, then, makes thy groans golden groans; thy tears golden tears; and thy prayers golden prayers, in the eye of that God thou comest to, coming sinner (Rev 8; Matt 23:19; Heb 10:10; 1 Peter 2:5).

3. God hath strewed all the way, from the gate of hell, where thou wast, to the gate of heaven, whither thou art going, with flowers out of his own garden. Behold how the promises, invitations, calls, and encouragements, like lilies, lie round about thee! take heed that thou dost not tread them under foot, sinner. With promises, did I say? Yea, he hath mixed all those with his own name, his Son's name; also, with the name of mercy, goodness, compassion, love, pity, grace, forgiveness, pardon, and what not, that may encourage the coming sinner.

4. He hath also for thy encouragement laid up the names, and set forth the sins, of those that have been saved. In this book they are fairly written, that thou, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, mightest have hope. (1.) In this book is recorded Noah's maim and sin; and how God had mercy upon him. (2.) In this record is fairly written the name of Lot, and the nature of his sin; and how the Lord had mercy upon him. (3.) In this record thou

hast also fairly written the names of Moses, Aaron, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, Peter, Paul, with the nature of their sins; and how God had mercy upon them; and all to encourage thee, coming sinner.

Fourth. I will add yet another encouragement for the man that is coming to Jesus Christ. Art thou coming? Art thou coming, indeed? Why,

1. Then this thy coming is by virtue of God's call. Thou art called. Calling goes before coming. Coming is not of works, but of him that calleth. "He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would; and they came unto him" (Mark 3:13).

2. Art thou coming? This is also by virtue of illumination. God has made thee see; and, therefore, thou art coming. So long as thou wast darkness, thou lovedst darkness, and couldst not abide to come, because thy deeds were evil; but being now illuminated and made to see what and where thou art, and also what and where thy Saviour is, now thou art coming to Jesus Christ; "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee," saith Christ, "but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt 16:17).

3. Art thou coming? This is because God hath inclined thine heart to come. God hath

called thee, illuminated thee, and inclined thy heart to come; and, therefore, thou comest to Jesus Christ. It is God that worketh in thee to *will*, and to come to Jesus Christ. Coming sinner, bless God for that he hath given thee a *will* to come to Jesus Christ. It is a sign that thou belongest to Jesus Christ, because God has made thee willing to come to him (Psa 110:3). Bless God for *slaying* the enmity of thy mind; had he not done it, thou wouldst *as yet have* hated thine own salvation.

4. Art thou coming to Jesus Christ? It is God that giveth thee power: *power* to pursue thy *will* in the matters of thy salvation, is the gift of God. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do" (Phil 2:13). Not that God worketh *will* to come, where he gives no power; but thou shouldest take notice, that power is an additional mercy. The church saw that *will* and *power* were two things, when she cried, "Draw me, we will run after thee" (Song 1:4). And so did David too, when he said, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart" (Psa 119:32). Will to come, and power to pursue thy will, is double mercy, coming sinner.

5. All thy strange, passionate, sudden rushings forward after Jesus Christ, coming sinners know what I mean, they also are thy

helps from God. Perhaps thou feelest at some times more than at others, strong stirrings up of heart to fly to Jesus Christ; now thou hast at this time a sweet and stiff gale of the Spirit of God, filling thy sails with the fresh gales of his good Spirit; and thou ridest at those times as upon the wings of the wind, being carried out beyond thyself, beyond the most of thy prayers, and also above all thy fear and temptations.

6. Coming sinner, hast thou not now and then a kiss of the sweet lips of Jesus Christ, I mean some blessed word dropping like a honey-comb upon thy soul to revive thee, when thou art in the midst of thy dumps?

7. Does not Jesus Christ sometimes give thee a glimpse of himself, though perhaps thou seest him not so long a time as while one may tell twenty.

8. Hast thou not sometimes as it were the very warmth of his wings overshadowing the face of thy soul, that gives thee as it were a gload[22] upon thy spirit, as the bright beams of the sun do upon thy body, when it suddenly breaks out of a cloud, though presently all is gone away? Well, all these things are the good hand of thy God upon thee, and they are upon thee to constrain, to provoke, and to make thee

[22] "A gload;" a warm, eager, passionate gazing: now obsolete. —Ed.

willing and able to come, coming sinner, that thou mightest in the end be saved.

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