

the sixth discourse to a treatise by

**JOHN BUNYAN**

entitled

**THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST AS AN  
ADVOCATE CLEARLY EXPLAINED  
AND LARGELY IMPROVED FOR THE  
BENEFIT OF ALL BELIEVERS**

*“And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the  
Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).*

Introduction Compiled & Edited by  
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This treatise was published in London in 1689, one year after John Bunyan's death. Our reading of this work, as well as the preface and introduction come from a three volume collection edited by George Offor, Esq., and entitled, *The Whole Works of John Bunyan*. George Offor's edition of Bunyan's works was published in Glasgow in 1862.



John Bunyan was born in Elstow, England, near Bedford, on November 28, 1628. After squandering much of his life away in worldly wantonness, Bunyan was converted to the Christian faith and soon afterward, became an excellent expositor of the Holy Scriptures. He was imprisoned in November 1660 for the crime of preaching without a license from the state church. He remained incarcerated for twelve years, with only a few, and brief occasions of liberty. Though he began writing his famous *The Pilgrim's Progress* while in prison, Bunyan may have finished the work a few years after his release in 1672. *The Pilgrim's Progress* was published in 1678. Bunyan also wrote many other excellent works such as *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, *Some Gospel Truths Opened According to the Scriptures*, *A Vindication of Some Gospel Truths Opened*, and this treatise, *The Work of Jesus Christ as an Advocate Clearly Explained*. A contemporary with such men as John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, and Richard Baxter, John Bunyan is recognized as possibly one of the greatest of the Puritan writers. Bunyan died on August 31, 1688, after taking ill from traveling through inclement weather. He was buried at Bunhill Fields.

George Offor's "Advertisement By the Editor" and John Bunyan's "Epistle to the Reader" are not in our audio reading of Bunyan's treatise. They are, however, very worth the time to read. Both are included in the document provided with the first reading of this work.

I have also included some footnotes that I thought might be helpful, especially for 17<sup>th</sup> century legal terms. Still, my desire is to use the footnotes very sparingly, so as not to disturb the flow of this work; one in which I consider to be one of John Bunyan's most excellent expositions.

## **Bunyan's 6<sup>th</sup> Discourse:**

### **OBJECTIONS REMOVED**

SIXTHLY, [I now come to answer some objections.]

*First* Objection. But what need all these offices of Jesus Christ? or, what need you trouble us with these nice distinctions? It is enough for us to believe in Christ in the general, without considering him under this and that office.

Answer. The wisdom of God is not to be charged with needless doing when it giveth to Jesus Christ such variety of offices, and calleth him to so many sundry employments for us; they are

all thought necessary by heaven, and therefore should not be counted superfluous by earth. And to put a question upon thy objection— What is a sacrifice without a priest, and what is a priest without a sacrifice? And the same I say of his Advocate’s office— What is an advocate without the exercise of his office? And what need of an Advocate’s office to be exercised, if Christ, as sacrifice and Priest, was thought sufficient by God? Each of these offices is sufficient for the perfecting the work for which it is designed; but they are not all designed for the self-same particular thing. Christ as sacrifice offereth not himself; it is Christ as Priest does that. Christ as Priest dieth not for our sins; it is Christ as sacrifice does so. Again, Christ as a sacrifice and a Priest limits himself to those two employs, but as an Advocate he launches out into a third. And since these are not confounded in heaven, nor by the Scriptures, they should not be confounded in our apprehension, nor accounted useless.

It is not, therefore, enough for us that we exercise our thoughts upon Christ in an indistinct and general way, but we must learn to know him in all his offices, and to know the nature of his offices also; our condition requires this, it requireth it, I say, as we are guilty of sin, as we have to do with God, and with our enemy the devil. As we are guilty of sin, so we need a sacrifice; and as we are also sinners, we need one perfect to present our sacrifice to God for us. We have need also of him as priest to present our persons and services to God. And since God is just, and upon the judgment-seat, and since also we are subject to sin grievously, and again, since we have an accuser who will by law plead at this bar of God our sins against us, to the end we might be condemned, we have need of, and also “have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Alas! How many of God’s precious people, for want of a distinct knowledge of Christ in all his offices, are at this day sadly baffled with the sophistications of the devil? To instance no more than this one thing— when they have committed some heinous sin after light received, how are they, I say, tossed and tumbled and distressed with many perplexities! They cannot come to any anchor in this their troubled sea; they go from promise to promise, from providence to providence, from this to that office of Jesus Christ, but forget that he is, or else understand not what it is for this Lord Jesus to be an Advocate for them. Hence they so oft sink under the fears that their sin is unpardonable, and that therefore their condition is desperate; whereas, if they could but consider that Christ is their Advocate, and that he is therefore made an Advocate to save them from those high transgressions that are committed by them, and that he waits upon this office continually before the judgment-seat of God, they would conceive relief, and be made to hold up their head, and would more strongly twist themselves from under that guilt and burden, those ropes and cords wherewith by their folly they have so strongly bound themselves, than commonly they have done, or do.

*Second Objection.* But notwithstanding what you have said, this sin is a deadly stick in my way; it will not out of my mind, my cause being bad, but Christ will desert me.

*Answer.* It is true, sin is, and will be, a deadly stick and stop to faith, attempt to exercise it on Christ as considered under which of his offices or relations you will; and, above all, the sin of unbelief is “the sin that doth so,” or most “easily beset us” (Hebrews 12:1-2). And no marvel; for it never acteth alone, but is backed, not only with guilt and ignorance, but also with carnal sense and reason. He that is ignorant of this knows but little of himself, or what believing is. He

that undertakes to believe sets upon the hardest task that ever was proposed to man; not because the things imposed upon us are unreasonable or unaccountable, but because the heart of man, the more true anything is, the more it sticks and stumbles thereat; and, says Christ, “Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not” (John 8:45). Hence believing is called labouring (Hebrews 4:11); and it is the sorest labour, at times that any man can take in hand, because assaulted with the greatest oppositions; but believe thou must, be the labour never so hard, and that not only in Christ in a general way, but in him as to his several offices, and to this of his being an Advocate in particular, else some sins and some temptations will not, in their guilt or vexatious trouble, easily depart from thy conscience; no, not by promise, nor by thy attempts to apply the same by faith. And this the text insinuateth by it’s setting forth of Christ as Advocate, as the only or best and most speedy way of relief to the soul in certain cases.

There is, then, an order that thou must observe in exercising of thy soul in a way of believing.

1. Thou must believe unto justification in general; and for this thou must direct thy soul to the Lord Christ as he is a sacrifice for sin; and as a Priest offering that sacrifice, so as a sacrifice thou shalt see him appeasing Divine displeasure for thy sin, and as a Priest spreading the skirt of his garment over thee, for the covering of thy nakedness; thus being clothed, thou shalt not be found naked.

2. This, when thou hast done as well as thou canst, thou must, in the next place, keep thine eye upon the Lord Christ as improving, as Priest in heaven, the sacrifice which he offered on earth for the continuing thee in a state of justification in thy lifetime, notwithstanding those common infirmities that attend thee, and to which thou art incident in all thy holy services or best performances (Romans 5:10; Exodus 28:31-38). For therefore is he a Priest in heaven, and by his sacrifices interceding for thee.

3. But if thy foot slippeth, if it slippeth greatly, then know thou it will not be long before a bill be in heaven preferred against thee by the accuser of the brethren; wherefore then thou must have recourse to Christ as Advocate, to plead before God thy judge against the devil thine adversary for thee.

4. And as to the badness of thy cause, let nothing move thee, save to humility and self-abasement, for Christ is glorified by being concerned for thee; yea, the angels will shout aloud to see him bring thee off. For what greater glory can we conceive Christ to obtain as Advocate, than to bring off his people when they have sinned, notwithstanding Satan so charging of them for it as he doth?

He gloried when he was going to the cross to die; he went up with a shout and the sound of a trumpet, to make intercession for us; and shall we think that by his being an Advocate he receives no additional glory? It is glory to him, doubtless, to bear the title of an Advocate, and much more to plead and prosper for us against our adversary, as he doth.

5. And, I say again, for thee to think that Christ will reject thee for that thy cause is bad, is a kind of thinking blasphemy against this his office and his Word; for what doth such a man but side with Satan, while Christ is pleading against him? I say, it is as the devil would have it, for it

puts strength into his plea against us, by increasing our sin and wickedness. But shall Christ take our cause in hand, and shall we doubt of good success?

This is to count Satan stronger than Christ; and that he can longer abide to oppose, than Christ can to plead for us. Wherefore, away with, it, not only as to the notion, but also as to the heart and root thereof. Oh! When shall Jesus Christ our Lord be honoured by us as he ought? This dastardly heart of ours, when shall it be more subdued and trodden under foot of faith? When shall Christ ride Lord, and King, and Advocate, upon the faith of his people, as he should? He is exalted before God, before angels, and above all the power of the enemy; there is nothing comes behind but the faith of his people.

*Third Objection.* But since you follow the metaphor so close, I will suppose, if an advocate be entertained, some recompense must be given him. His fee— who shall pay him his fee? I have nothing. Could I do anything to make this advocate part of amends, I could think I might have benefit from him; but I have nothing. What say you to this?

Answer. Similitudes must not be strained too far; but yet I have an answer for this objection. There is, in some cases, law for them that have no money; ay, law and lawyers too; and this is called a suing in forma pauperis;<sup>1</sup> and such lawyers are appointed by authority for that purpose. Indeed, I know not that it is thus in every nation, but it is sometimes so with us in England; and this is the way altogether in the kingdom of heaven before the bar of God. All is done there for us in forma pauperis, on free cost; for our Advocate or lawyer is thereto designed and appointed of his Father.

Hence Christ is said to plead the cause, not of the rich and wealthy, but of the poor and needy; not of those that have many friends, but of the fatherless and widow; not of them that are fat and strong, but of those under sore afflictions (Proverbs 22:22-23; 23:10-11; 31:9). “He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul,” or, as it is in the margin,<sup>2</sup> “from the judges of his soul” (Psalm 109:31). This, then, is the manner of Jesus Christ with men; he doth freely what he doth, not for price nor reward. “I have raised him up,” says God, “and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for a price nor reward” (Isaiah 45:13). [This scripture speaks of Cyrus, a type of Christ.]

This, I say, is the manner of Jesus Christ with men; he pleads, he sues in forma pauperis, gratis,<sup>3</sup> and of mere compassion; and hence it is that you have his clients give him thanks; for that is all the poor can give. “I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul” (Psalm 109:30-31).

They know but little that talk of giving to Christ, except they mean they would give him blessing

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<sup>1</sup> A legal term applied to the client’s inability to pay for services; from the combination of two Latin words, *forma* meaning “form, figure, appearance,” or “beauty, mold, pattern”; and *pauperis*, meaning “poverty.”

<sup>2</sup> Bunyan refers to the margin notes of Psalm 109:31 from the **Geneva Bible**, the translation used by the Puritans. **Psalm 109:31**, “By this he shows that he had nothing to do with them who were of little power, but with the judges and princes of the world.”

<sup>3</sup> *Gratis*, a Latin word meaning “free, freely” or “without payment”; as a legal term, it not only applies to the attorney’s freely surrendering his regular fee, but also his willingness to freely render those services without payment.

and praise. He bids us come freely, take freely, and tells us that he will give and do freely (Revelation 22:17; Revelation 21:6). Let him have that which is his own—to wit, thyself; for thou art the price of his blood. David speaks very strangely of giving to God for mercy bestowed on him; I call it strangely, because indeed it is so to reason. “What,” says he, “shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord” for more (Psalm 116:12-13). God has no need of thy gift, nor Christ of thy bribe, to plead thy cause; take thankfully what is offered, and call for more; that is the best giving to God. God is rich enough; talk not then of giving, but of receiving, for thou art poor. Be not too high, nor think thyself too good to live by the alms of heaven; and since the Lord Jesus is willing to serve thee freely, and to maintain thy right to heaven against thy foe, to the saving of thy soul, without price or reward, “let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called,” as is the rest of “the body, and be ye thankful” (Colossians 3:15). This, then, is the privilege of a Christian. “We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”; one that pleadeth the cause of his people against those that rise up against them, of his love, pity, and mere goodwill. Lord, open the eyes of dark readers, of disconsolate saints, that they may see who is for them, and on what terms!

*Fourth Objection.* But if Christ doth once begin to plead for me, and shall become mine Advocate, he will always be troubled with me, unless I should, of myself, forsake him; for I am ever in broils and suits of law, action after action is laid upon me, and I am sometimes ten times in a day summoned to answer my doings before God.

Answer. Christ is not an Advocate to plead a cause or two; nor to deliver the godly from an accusation or two. “He delivereth Israel out of all his troubles” (Psalm 25:22; 2 Samuel 22:28); and chooses to be an Advocate for such; therefore, the godly of old did use to make, from the greatness of their troubles, and the abundance of their troublers, an argument to the Lord Christ to send and lend them help—“Have mercy upon me,” saith David; “consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me” (Psalm 9:13). And again, “Many are they that rise up against me; many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God” (Psalm 3:1-2). Yea the troubles of this man were so many and great, that his enemies began to triumph over him, saying, “There is no help for him in God.” But could he not deliver him, or did the Lord forsake him? No, no; “Thou hast smitten,” saith he, “all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.” And as he delivereth them from their troublers, so also he pleadeth all their causes; “O Lord,” saith the church, “thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life” (Lamentations 3:58). Mark, troubled Christian, thou sayest thou hast been arrested oftentimes in a day, and as often summoned to appear at God’s bar, there to answer to what shall be laid to thy charge. And here, for thy encouragement, thou readest that the church hath an Advocate that pleadeth the causes of her soul; that is, all her causes, to deliver her. He knows that, so long as we are in this world, we are subject to temptation and weakness, and through them made guilty of many bad things; wherefore, he hath prepared himself to our service, and to abide with the Father, an Advocate for us. As Solomon saith of a man of great wrath, so it may be said of a man of great weakness, and the best of saints are such—he must be delivered again and again (Proverbs 19:19); yea, “many a time,” saith David, “did he deliver them” (Psalm 106:43); to wit, more than once or twice; and he will do so for thee, if thou entertain him to be thine Advocate. Thou talkest of leaving him, but then whither wilt thou go? All else are vain things, things that cannot profit; and he will not forsake his people (1 Samuel

12:20-23), “though their land be filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel” (Jeremiah 51:5). I know the modest saint is apt to be abashed to think what a troublesome one he is, and what a make-work he has been in God’s house all his days; and let him be filled with holy blushing; but let him not forsake his Advocate.