

the third 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Discourse:**

### **WHO HAVE CHRIST FOR AN ADVOCATE**

THIRDLY, And I shall come now to the third head; to wit, to show you more particularly who they are that have Jesus Christ for their Advocate.

In my handling of this head, I shall show, First, That this office of an advocate differeth from that of a priest, and how. Second, I shall show you how far Christ extendeth this his office of advocateship—I mean, in matters concerning the people of God, And then, Third, I shall come more directly to show who they are that have Christ for their Advocate.

*First*, For the first of these, That this office of Christ, as an Advocate, differeth from that of a Priest. That he is a Priest, a Priest for ever, I heartily acknowledge; but that his priesthood and advocateship should be one and the self-same office, I cannot believe.

1. Because they differ in name. We may as well say a father, as such, is a son, or that father and son is the self-same relation, as say a priest and an advocate, as to office, are but one and the same thing. They differ in name as much as priest and sacrifice do: a priest is one, and a sacrifice is another; and though Christ is Priest and Sacrifice too, yet, as a Priest, he is not a Sacrifice, nor, as a Sacrifice, a Priest.

2. As they differ in name, so they differ in the nature of office. A priest is to slay a sacrifice; an advocate is to plead a cause; a priest is to offer his sacrifice, to the end that, by the merit thereof, he may appease; an advocate is to plead, to plead according to law; a priest is to make intercession, by virtue of his sacrifice; an advocate is to plead law, because amends is made.

3. As they differ in name and nature, so they also differ as to their extent. The priesthood of Christ extendeth itself to the whole of God's elect, whether called or in their sins; but Christ, as Advocate, pleadeth only for the children.

4. As they differ in name, in nature, and extent, so they differ as to the persons with whom they have to do. We read not anywhere that Christ, as Priest, has to do with the devil as an antagonist, but, as an Advocate, he hath.

5. As they differ in these, so they differ as to the matters about which they are employed. Christ, as Priest, concerns himself with every wry thought, and, also, with the least imperfection or infirmity that attends our most holy things; but Christ, as Advocate, doth not so, as I have already showed.

6. So that Christ, as Priest, goes before, and Christ, as an Advocate, comes after; Christ, as Priest, continually intercedes; Christ, as Advocate, in case of great transgressions, pleads: Christ, as Priest, has need to act always, but Christ, as Advocate, sometimes only. Christ, as Priest, acts in times of peace; but Christ, as Advocate, in times of broils, turmoils, and sharp contentions; wherefore, Christ, as Advocate, is, as I may call him, a reserve, and his time is then to arise, to stand up and plead, when HIS are clothed with some filthy sin that of late they have fallen into, as David, Joshua, or Peter. When some such thing is committed by them, as ministereth to the enemy a show of ground to question the truth of their grace; or when it is a question, and to be debated, whether it can stand with the laws of heaven, with the merits of Christ, and the honour of God, that such a one should be saved. Now let an advocate come forth, now let him have time to plead, for this is a fit occasion for the saints' Advocate to stand up to plead for the salvation of his people. But,

*Second*, I come next to show you how far this office of an Advocate is extended. I hinted at this before, so now shall be the more brief.

1. By this office he offereth no sacrifice; he only, as to matter of justice, pleads the sacrifice offered.

2. By this office he obtains the conversion of none; he only thereby secureth the converted from the damnation which their adversary, for sins after light and profession, endeavoureth to bring them to.

3. By this office he prevents not temporal punishment, but by it he chiefly preserveth the soul from hell.

4. By this office he brings in no justifying righteousness for us, he only thereby prevaieth to have the dispose of that brought in by himself, as Priest, for the justifying of those, by a new and fresh act, who had made their justification doubtful by new falls into sin. And this is plain in the history of our Joshua, so often mentioned before (Zechariah 3:1-10).

5. As Priest, he hath obtained eternal redemption for us; and as Advocate, he by law, maintaineth our right thereto, against the devil and his angels.

*Third*, I come now to show you who they are that have Jesus Christ for their Advocate. And this I shall do— first, more generally, and then shall be more particular and distinct about it.

1. More generally. They are all the truly gracious; those that are the children by adoption; and this the test affirmeth— “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” They are, then, the children, by adoption, that are the persons concerned in the advocateship of Jesus Christ. The priesthood of Christ extendeth itself to the whole body of the elect, but the advocateship of Christ doth not so. This is further cleared by this apostle; and in this very text, if you consider what immediately follows— “We have an Advocate,” says he, “and he is the propitiation for our sins.” He is our Advocate, and also our Priest. As an Advocate, ours only; but as a propitiation, not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world; to be sure, for the elect throughout the world, and they that will extend it further, let them.

And I say again, had he not intended that there should have been a straiter limit put to the Advocateship of Christ than he would have us put to his priestly office, what needed he, when he speaketh of the propitiation which relates to Christ as Priest, have added, “And not for ours only”? As an Advocate, then, he engageth for us that are children; and as a Priest, too, he hath appeased God’s wrath for our sins; but as an Advocate his offices are confined to the children only, but as a Priest he is not so. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only. The sense, therefore, of the apostle should, I think, be this, That Christ, as a Priest, hath offered a propitiatory sacrifice for all; but as an Advocate he pleadeth only for the children. Children, we have an Advocate to ourselves, and he is also our Priest; but as he is a Priest, he is not ours only, but maketh, as such, amends for all that shall be saved. The elect, therefore, have the Lord Jesus for their Advocate then, and then only, when they are by calling put among the children; because, as Advocate, he is peculiarly the children’s, “My little children, WE have an Advocate.”

Objection. But he also saith, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate”; any man that sinneth seems, by the text, notwithstanding what you say, “to have an Advocate with the Father.”

Answer. By any man, must not be meant any of the world, nor any of the elect, but any man in faith and grace; for he still limits this general term, “any man,” with this restriction, “we”—Children, “if any man sin, we have an Advocate.” We, any man of us. And this is yet further made appear, since he saith that it is to them he writes, not only here, but further in this chapter—“I write unto YOU, little children; I write unto you, fathers; I write unto you, young men” (1 John 2:12-13). These are the persons intended in the text, for under these three heads are comprehended all men; for they are either children, and so men in nature, or young men, and so men in strength; or else they are fathers, and so aged, and of experience. Add to this, by “any man,” that the apostle intendeth not to enlarge himself beyond the persons that are in grace; but to supply what was wanting by that term “little children”; for since the strongest saint may have heed of an Advocate, as well as the most feeble of the flock, why should the apostle leave it to be so understood as if the children, and the children only, had an interest in that office? Wherefore, after he had said, “My little children, I write unto you, that ye sin not”; he then adds, with enlargement, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.” Yet the little children may well be mentioned first, since they most want the knowledge of it, are most feeble, and so by sin may be forced most frequently to act faith on Christ, as Advocate. Besides, they are most ready, through temptation, to question whether they have so good a right to Christ in all his offices as have better and more well-grown saints; and, therefore, they, in this the apostle’s salutation, are first set down in the catalogue of names—“My little children, I write unto you, that ye sin not. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” So, then, the children of God are they who have the Lord Jesus, an Advocate for them with the Father. The least and biggest, the oldest and youngest, the feeblest and the strongest; ALL the children have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

(1.) Since, then, the children have Christ for their advocate, art thou a child? Art thou begotten of God by his Word? (James 1:18). Hast thou in thee the spirit of adoption? (Galatians 4:1-6). Canst thou in faith say, Father, Father, to God? Then is Christ thy Advocate, thine Advocate, “now to appear in the presence of God for thee” (Hebrews 9:24). To appear there, and to plead there, in the face of the court of heaven, for thee; to plead there against thine adversary, whose accusations are dreadful, whose subtlety is great, whose malice is inconceivable, and whose rage is intolerable; to plead there before a just God, a righteous God, a sin-revenging God: before whose face thou wouldst die if thou wast to show thyself, and at his bar to plead thine own cause. But,

(2.) There is a difference in children; some are bigger than some; there are children and little children—“My little children, I write unto you.” Little children; some of the little children can neither say Father, nor so much as know that they themselves are children.

This is true in nature, and so it is in grace; wherefore, notwithstanding what was said under the first head, it doth not follow, that if I be a child I must certainly know it, and also be able to call God, Father. Let the first, then, serve to poise and balance the confident ones, and let this be for the relief of those more feeble; for they that are children, whether they know it or no, have Jesus Christ for their Advocate, for Christ is assigned to be our Advocate by the Judge, by the King, by our God and Father, although we have not known it. True, at present, there can come from hence, to them that are thus concerned in the advocateship of Christ, but little comfort; but yet it yields them great security; they have “an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

God knows this, the devil feels this, and the children shall have the comfort of it afterwards. I say, the time is coming when they shall know that even then, when they knew it not, they had an Advocate with the Father; an Advocate who was neither loath, nor afraid, nor ashamed, to plead for their defense against their proudest foe. And will not this, when they know it, yield them comfort? Doubtless it will; yea, more, and of a better kind, than that which flows from the knowledge that one is born to crowns and kingdoms.

Again; as he is an Advocate for the children, so he is also, as before was hinted, for the strong and experienced; for no strength in this world secureth from the rage of hell; nor can any experience, while we are here, fortify us against his assaults. There is also an incidency in the best to sin; and the bigger man, the bigger fall; for the more hurt, the greater damage. Wherefore it is of absolute necessity that an advocate be provided for the strong as for the weak. “Any man”; he that is most holy, most reformed, most refined, and most purified, may as soon be in the dirt as the weakest Christian; and, so far as I can see, Satan’s design is against them most. I am sure the greatest sins have been committed by the biggest saints. This wayfaring man came to David’s house, and when he stood up against Israel, he provoked David to number the people (2 Samuel 12:4, 7; 1 Chronicles 21:1). Wherefore they have as much need of an advocate as have the youngest and most feeble of the flock. What a mind had he to try a fall with Peter! And how quickly did he break the neck of Judas! The like, without doubt, he had done to Peter, had not Jesus, by stepping in, prevented. As long as sin is in our flesh, there is danger. Indeed, he saith of the young men that they are strong, and that they have overcome the wicked one; but he doth not say they have killed him. As long as the devil is alive there is danger; and though a strong Christian may be too hard for, and may overcome him in one thing, he may be too hard for, yea, and may overcome him two for one afterwards. Thus he served David, and thus he served Peter, and thus he, in our day, has served many more. The strongest are weak, the wisest are fools, when suffered to be sifted as wheat in Satan’s sieve; yea, and have often been so proved, to the wounding of their great hearts, and the dishonour of religion. To conclude this: God of his mercy hath sufficiently declared the truth of what I say, by preparing for the best, the strongest, and most sanctified, as well as for the least, weakest, and most feeble saint, as Advocate—“My little children, I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

2. But some may object, that what has been said as to discovering for whom Christ is an Advocate has been too general, and, therefore, would have me come more to particulars, else they can get no comfort. Well, inquiring soul, so I will; and, therefore, hearken to what I say.

(1.) Wouldest thou know whether Christ is thine Advocate or no? I ask, Hast thou entertained him so to be? When men have suits of law depending in any of the king’s courts above, they entertain their attorney or advocate to plead their cause, and so he pleads for them. I say, hast thou entertained Jesus Christ for thy lawyer to plead thy cause? “Plead my cause, O Lord,” said David (Psalm 35:1); and again, “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause” (Psalm 43:1). This, therefore, is the first thing that I would propound to thee: Hast thou, with David, entertained him for thy lawyer, or, with good Hezekiah, cried out, “O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me” (Isaiah 38:14). What sayest thou, soul? Hast thou been with him, and prayed him to plead thy cause, and cried unto him to undertake for thee? This I call entertaining of him to be thy advocate, and I choose to follow the similitude, both because the Scripture seems to smile upon

such a way of discourse, and because thy question doth naturally lead me to it. Wherefore, I ask again, hast thou been with him? Hast thou entertained him? Hast thou desired him to plead thy cause?

Question. Thou wilt say unto me, How should I know that I have done so?

Answer. I answer, Art thou sensible that thou hast an action commenced against thee in that high court of justice that is above? I say, Art thou sensible of this? For the defendants—and all God's people are defendants—do not use to entertain their lawyers, but from knowledge, that an action either is, or may be, commenced against them before the God of heaven. If thou sayest yea, then I ask, Who told thee that thou standest accused for transgression before the judgment-seat of God? I say, Who told thee so? Hath the Holy Ghost, hath the world, or hath thy conscience? For nothing else, as I know of, can bring such tidings to thy soul.

Again; Hast thou found a failure in all others that might have been entertained to plead thy cause? Some make their sighs, their tears, their prayers, and their reformations, their advocates—“Hast thou tried these, and found them wanting?” Hast thou seen thy state to be desperate, if the Lord Jesus doth not undertake to plead thy cause? for Jesus is not entertained so long as men can make shift without him. But when it comes to this point I perish for ever, notwithstanding the help of all, if the Lord Jesus steps not in. Then Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, good Lord Jesus! undertake for me. Hast thou therefore been with Jesus Christ as concerned in thy soul, as heartily concerned about the action that thou perceivest to be commenced against thee?

Question. You will say, How should I know that?

Answer. I answer, Hast thou well considered the nature of the crime wherewith thou standest charged at the bar of God? Hast thou also considered the justness of the Judge? Again I ask, Hast thou considered what truth, as to matter of fact, there is in the things whereof thou standest accused? Also, Hast thou considered the cunning, the malice, and diligence of thy adversary, with the greatness of the loss thou art like to sustain, shouldst thou with Ahab, in the book of Kings (1 Kings 22:17-23), or with the hypocrites in Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5-10), have the verdict of the Lord God go out from the throne against thee? I ask thee these questions, because if thou art in the knowledge of these things to seek, or if thou art not deeply concerned about the greatness of the damage that will certainly overtake thee, and that for ever, shouldest thou be indeed accused before God, and have none to plead thy cause, thou hast not, nor canst not, let what will come upon thee, have been with Jesus Christ to plead thy cause; and so, let thy case be never so desperate, thou standest alone, and hast no helper (Job 30:13; 9:13). Or if thou hast, they, not being the advocate of God's appointing, must needs fall with thee, and with thy burden. Wherefore, consider of this seriously, and return thy answer to God, who can tell if truth shall be found in thy answers, better by far than any; for it is he that tries the reins and the heart, and therefore to him I refer thee. But,

(2.) Wouldst thou know whether Jesus Christ is thine advocate? Then I ask again, Hast thou revealed thy cause unto him?—I say, Hast thou revealed thy cause unto him? For he that goeth to law for his right, must not only go to a lawyer, and say, Sir, I am in trouble, and am to have a trial at law with mine enemy, pray undertake my cause; but he must also reveal to his lawyer his

cause. He must go to him and tell him what is the matter, how things stand, where the shoe pinches, and so. Thus did the church of old, and thus doth every true Christian now; for though nothing can be hid from him, yet he will have things out of thine own mouth; he will have thee to reveal thy matters unto him (Matthew 20:32). “O Lord of hosts,” said Jeremiah, “that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause” (Jeremiah 11:20). And again; “But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I opened my cause” (Jeremiah 20:12). Seest thou here, how saints of old were wont to do? how they did, not only in a general way, entreat Christ to plead their cause, but in a particular way, go to him and reveal, or open their cause unto him?

O! it is excellent to behold how some sinners will do this when they get Christ and themselves in a closet alone; when they, upon their bare knees, are pouring out of their souls before him; or, like the woman in the gospel, telling him all the truth (Mark 5). O! saith the soul, Lord, I am come to thee upon an earnest business; I am arrested by Satan; the bailiff was mine own conscience, and I am like to be accused before the judgment-seat of God. My salvation lies at stake; I am questioned for my interest in heaven; I am afraid of the Judge; my heart condemns me (1 John 3:20). Mine enemy is subtle, and wanteth not malice to prosecute me to death, and then to hell. Also, Lord, I am sensible that the law is against me, for indeed I have horribly sinned, and thus and thus have I done. Here I lie open to law, and there I lie open to law; here I have given the adversary advantage, and there he will surely have a hank against me. Lord, I am distressed, undertake for me! And there are some things that thou must be acquainted with about thine Advocate, before thou wilt venture to go thus far with him. As,

(a.) Thou must know him to be a friend, and not an enemy, unto whom thou openest thy heart; and until thou comest to know that Christ is a friend to thee, or to souls in thy condition, thou wilt never reveal thy cause unto him, not thy whole cause unto him. And it is from this that so many that have soul causes hourly depending before the throne of God, and that are in danger every day of eternal damnation, forbear to entertain Jesus Christ for their Advocate, and so wickedly conceal their matters from him; but “he that hideth his sins shall not prosper” (Proverbs 28:13).

This, therefore, must first be believed by thee before thou wilt reveal thy cause unto him.

(b.) A man, when his estate is called in question, I mean his right and title thereto, will be very cautious, especially if he also questions his title to it himself, unto whom he reveals that affair; he must know him to be one that is not only friendly, but faithful, to whom he reveals such a secret as this. Why, thus it is with Christ and the soul. If the soul is not somewhat persuaded of the faithfulness of Christ—to wit, that if he can do him no good, he will do him no harm, he will never reveal his cause unto him, but will seek to hide his counsel from the Lord. This, therefore, is another thing by which thou mayest know that thou hast Christ for thine Advocate, if thou hast heartily and in very deed revealed thy cause unto him. Now, they that do honestly reveal their cause to their lawyer, will endeavour to possess him, as I hinted before, with the worst; they will, with words, make it as bad as they may; for, think they, by that means I shall prepare him for the worst that mine enemy can do. And thus souls deal with Jesus Christ; see Psalms 51 and Psalms 38, with several others that might be named, and see if God’s people have not done so. “I said,”



saith David, "I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." But,

(3.) Hast thou Jesus Christ for thine Advocate? or wouldst thou know if thou hast? Then I ask again, Hast thou committed thy cause to him? When a man entertains his lawyer to stand for him and to plead his cause, he doth not only reveal, but commit his cause unto him. "I would seek unto God," says Eliphaz to Job, "and unto God would I commit my cause" (Job 5:8). Now there is a difference betwixt revealing my cause and committing of it to a man. To reveal my cause is to open it to one; and to commit it to him is to trust it in his hand. Many a man will reveal his cause to him unto whom he will yet be afraid to commit it; but now, he that entertains a lawyer to plead his cause, doth not only reveal but commit his cause into him. As, suppose right to his estate be called in question; why, then, he not only reveals his cause to his lawyer, but puts into his hands his evidences, deeds, leases, mortgages, bonds, or what else he hath, to show a title to his estate by. And thus doth Christians deal with Christ; they deliver up all unto him—to wit, all their signs, evidences, promises, and assurances, which they have thought they had for heaven and the salvation of their souls, and have desired him to peruse, to search, and try them every one. "And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). This is committing of thy cause to Christ, and this is the hardest task of all, for the man that doth thus, he trusteth Christ with all; and it implieth, that he will live and die, stand and fall, lose and win, according as Christ will manage his business. Thus did Paul, (2 Timothy 1:12), and thus Peter admonishes us to do. Now he that doth this must be convinced,

(a.) Of the ability of Jesus Christ to defend him; for a man will not commit so great a concern as his all is to his friend. No; not to his friend, be he never so faithful, if he perceives not in him ability to save him, and to preserve what he hath, against all the cavils of an enemy. And hence it is that the ability of Jesus Christ, as to the saving of his people, is so much insisted on in the Scripture; as, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty" (Psalm 89:19). "'I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save" (Isaiah 63:1). And again, "He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one" (Isaiah 19:20).

(b.) As they must be convinced of his ability to help them, so they must of his courage; a man that has parts sufficient may yet fail his friend for want of courage; wherefore, the courage and greatness of Christ's Spirit, as to his undertaking of the cause of his people, is also amply set out in Scripture. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth," "till he send forth judgment unto victory" (Isaiah 42:4; Matthew 12:20).

(c.) They must also be convinced of his willingness to do this for them; for though one be able and of courage sufficient, yet if he is not willing to undertake one's cause, what is it the better? Wherefore, he declareth his willingness also, and how ready he is to stand up to plead the cause of the poor and of them that are in want. "The Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them" (Proverbs 22:23).

(d.) They must also be convinced of this—that Christ is tender, and will not be offended at the dullness of his client. Some men can reveal their cause to their lawyers better than some, and are more serviceable and handy in that affair than others. But, saith the Christian, I am dull and stupid that way, will not Christ be shuff and shy with me because of this? Honest heart! He hath

a supply of thy defects in himself, and knoweth what thou wantest, and where the shoe pinches, though thou art not able distinctly to open matters to him. The child is pricked with a pin, and lies crying in the mother's lap, but cannot show it's mother where the pin is; but there is pity enough in the mother to supply this defect of the child; wherefore she undresses it, opens it, searches every clout from head to the foot of the child, and so finds where the pin is. Thus will thy lawyer do; he will search and find out thy difficulties, and where Satan seeketh an advantage of thee, accordingly will provide his remedy.

(e.) O, but will he not be weary? The prophet complains of some, "that they weary God" (Isaiah 7:13). And mine is a very cross and intricate cause; I have wearied many a good man while I have been telling my tale unto him, and I am afraid that I shall also weary Jesus Christ. Answer. Soul, he suffered and did bear with the manners of Israel forty years in the wilderness; and hast thou tried him half so long? (Acts 13:18). The good souls that have gone before thee have found him "a tried stone," a sure one to be trusted to as to this (Isaiah 28:16). And the prophet saith positively that "he fainteth not, neither is weary"; and that "there is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:28). Let all these things prevail with thee to believe, that if thou hast committed by cause unto him, he will bring it to pass, to a good pass, to so good a pass as will glorify God, honour Christ, save thee, and shame the devil. But,

(4.) Wouldst thou know whether Jesus Christ is thine Advocate, whether he has taken in hand to plead thy cause? Then, I ask, dost thou, together with what has been mentioned before, wait upon him according to his counsel, until things shall come to a legal issue? Thus must clients do. There is a great many turnings and windings about suits and trials at law; the enemy, also, with his supersedeas<sup>1</sup> cavils, and motions, often defers a speedy issue; wherefore, the man whose is the concern must wait; as the prophet said, "I will look," said he, "unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation." But how long, prophet, wilt thou wait? Why, says he, "until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me" (Micah 7:7-10).

Perhaps when thy cause is tried, things for the present are upon this issue; thy adversary, indeed, is cast, but whether thou shalt have an absolute discharge, as Peter had, or a conditional one, as David, and as the Corinthians had, that is the question (2 Samuel 12:10-14). True, thou shalt be completely saved at last; but yet whether it is not best to leave to thee a memento of God's displeasure against thy sin, by awarding that the sword shall never depart from thy house, or that some sore sickness or other distresses shall haunt thee as long as thou livest, or, perhaps, that thou shalt walk without the light of God's countenance for several years and a day. Now, if any of these three things happen unto thee, thou must exercise patience, and wait; thus did David—"I waited patiently"; and again he exercises his soul in this virtue, saying "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him" (Psalm 62:5). For now we are judged of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. And by this judgment, though it sets us free from their damnation, yet we are involved in many troubles, and, perhaps, must wait many a day before we can know that, as to the main, the verdict hath gone on our side. Thus, therefore, in order to thy waiting upon him without fainting, it is meet that thou shouldest know the methods of him that manages thy cause for thee in heaven; and suffer not mistrust to break in and

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<sup>1</sup> SUPERSEDEAS, *n.* In law, a writ of supersedeas, is a writ or command to suspend the powers of an officer in certain cases, or to stay proceedings. This writ does not destroy the power of an officer, for it may be revived by another writ called a procedendo. (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)

bear sway in thy soul, for “he will” at length “bring thee forth to the light, and thou shalt behold his righteousness. She, also, that is thine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which saith unto thee, Where is the Lord thy God?” (Micah 7:9-10).

Question. But what is it to wait upon him according to his counsel?

Answer.

(a.) To wait is to be of good courage, to live in expectation, and to look for deliverance, though thou hast sinned against thy God. “Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord” (Psalm 27:14).

(b.) To wait upon him is to keep his way, to walk humbly in his appointments. “Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land” (Psalm 37:34).

(c.) To wait upon him is to observe and keep those directions which he giveth thee; to observe even while he stands up to plead thy cause; for without this, or not doing this, a man may mar his cause in the hand of him that is to plead it; wherefore, keep thee far from an evil matter, have no correspondence with thine enemy, walk humbly for the wickedness thou hast committed, and loathe and abhor thyself for it, in dust and ashes. To these things doth the Scripture everywhere direct us.

(d.) To wait, is also to incline, to hearken to those further directions which thou mayest receive from the mouth of thine advocate, as to any fresh matters that may forward and expedite a good issue of thine affair in the court of heaven. The want of this was the reason that the deliverance of Israel did linger so long in former times. “O,” says he, “that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him; but their time should have endured for ever” (Psalm 81:13-15).

(e.) Also, if it tarry long, wait for it. Do not conclude that thy cause is lost because at present thou dost not hear from court. Cry, if thou wilt, O, when wilt thou come unto me? But never let such a wicked thought pass through thy heart, saying, “This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?” (2 Kings 6:33).

(f.) But take heed that thou turnest not thy waiting into sleeping. Wait thou must, and wait patiently too; but yet wait with much longing and earnestness of spirit, to see or hear how matters go above. You may observe, that when a man that dwells far down in the country, and has some business at the term, in this or another of the king’s courts, though he will wait his lawyer’s time and convenience, yet he will so wait as still to inquire at the post house, or at the carrier’s, or if a neighbour comes down from term, at his mouth, for letters, or any other intelligence, if possibly he may arrive to know how his cause speeds, and whether his adversary, or he, has the day. Thus, I say, thou must wait upon thine Advocate. His ordinances are his post house, his ministers are his carriers, where tidings from heaven are to be had, and where those that are sued in that court by the devil may, at one time or another, hear from their lawyer, their advocate, how things are like to go. Wherefore, I say, wait at the posts of wisdom’s house, go to ordinances

with expectation to hear from thy Advocate there; for he will send in due time; “though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Habakkuk 2:1-3). And now, soul, I have answered thy request, and let me hear what thou sayest unto me.

Soul.— Truly, says the soul, methinks that by what you have said, I may have this blessed Jesus to be mine Advocate; for I think, verily, I have entertained him to be mine Advocate. I have also revealed my cause unto him, yea, committed both it and myself unto him; and, as you say, I wait; oh! I wait! and my eyes fail with looking upward. Fain would I hear how my soul standeth in the sight of God, and whether my sins, which I have committed since light and grace were given unto me, be by mine Advocate, taken out of the hand of the devil, and by mine Advocate removed as far from me as the ends of the earth are asunder; whether the verdict has gone on my side, and what a shout there was among the angels when they saw it went well with me! But alas! I have waited, and that a long time, and have, as you advise, run from ordinance to minister, and from minister to ordinance, or, as you phrase it, from the post to the carrier, and from the carrier to the post house, to see if I could hear aught from heaven how matters went about my soul there. I have also asked those that pass by the way, “if they saw him whom my soul loveth,” and if they had anything to communicate to me? But nothing can I get or find but generals; as, that I have an Advocate there, and that he pleadeth the cause of his people, and that he will thoroughly plead their cause. But what he has done for ME, of that as yet I am ignorant. I doubt if my soul shall by him be effectually secured, that yet a conditional verdict will be awarded concerning me, and that much bitter will be mixed with my sweet, and that I must drink gall and wormwood for my folly; for if David, and Asa, and Hezekiah and such good men, were so served for their sins (2 Chronicles 16:7-12), why should I look for other dealing at the hand of God? But as to this, I will endeavour to “bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him” (Micah 7:9), and shall count it an infinite mercy, if this judgment comes to me from him, that I may “not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32). I know it is dreadful walking in darkness; but if that also shall be the Lord’s lot upon me; I pray God I may have faith enough to stay upon him till death, and then will the clouds blow over, and I shall see him in the light of the living.

Mine, enemy, the devil, as you see, is of an inveigling temper; and though he has accused me before the judgment-seat of God, yet when he comes to me at any time, he glavers<sup>2</sup> and flatters as if he never did mean me harm; but I think it is that he might get further advantage against me. But I carry it now at a greater distance than formerly; and O that I was at the remotest distance, not only from him, but also from that self of mine, that laboureth with him for my undoing!

But although I say these things now, and to you, yet I have my solitary hours, and in them I have other strange thoughts; for thus I think, my cause is bad, I have sinned, and I have been vile. I am ashamed myself of mine own doings, and have given mine enemy the best end of the staff. The law, and reason, and my conscience, plead for him against me, and all is true; he puts into his charge against me, that I have sinned more times than there be hairs on my head. I know not anything that ever I did in my life but it had flaw, or wrinkle, or spot, or some such thing in it. Mine eyes have seen vileness in the best of my doings; what, then, think you, must God needs see in them? Nor can I do anything yet, for all I know that I am accused by my enemy before the

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<sup>2</sup> GLAVER, *v.i.* [L. glaber, lavis, or lubricus; Eng. glib.] To flatter; to wheedle. [Little used and vulgar.] (Webster 1828 Dictionary)

judgment-seat of God, better than what already is imperfect. “I lie down in my shame, and my confusion covers my face.” “I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men” (Jeremiah 3:25; Job 7:20).

Reply. —Well, soul, I have heard what thou hast said, and if all be true which thou hast said, it is good, and gives me ground of hope that Jesus Christ is become thine Advocate; and if that be so, no doubt but thy trial will come to a good conclusion. And be not afraid because of the holiness of God; for thine Advocate has this for his advantage, that he pleads before a judge that is just, and against an enemy that is unholy and rejected. Nor let the thoughts of the badness of thy cause terrify thee overmuch. Cause thou hast indeed to be humble, and thou dost well to cover thy face with shame; and it is no matter how base and vile thou art in thine own eyes, provided that it comes not by renewed acts of rebellion, but through a spiritual sight of thine imperfections. Only let me advise thee here to stop. Let not thy shame nor thy self-abasing apprehension of thyself, drive thee from the firm and permanent ground of hope, which is the promise, and the doctrine of an Advocate with the Father. No; let not the apprehension of the badness of thy cause do it, forasmuch as he did never yet take cause in hand that was good, perfectly good of itself; and his excellency is, to make a man stand that has a bad cause; yea, he can make a bad cause good, in a way of justice and righteousness.