

## MEN BY NATURE UNWILLING TO COME TO CHRIST.

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*Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.*—JOHN V. 40.

THE Lord Jesus having miraculously cured an impotent man on the Sabbath day, the unbelieving Jews are so far from believing in him, that they blaspheme, persecute, and reproach him as a profaner of the Sabbath, ver. 16. Christ hereupon makes an apology for himself, and proves by unanswerable arguments, that his act was no violation of the Sabbath, to the 31st verse. But the Jews, full of malice and unbelief, were apt to object, that the weight of his own arguments lay upon his own testimony, and a man's testimony of himself in his own cause is not counted valid or credible, ver. 31. But though this objection have only place amongst men (whose testimony of themselves is not satisfactory and convincing), and cannot be made use of to weaken the testimony of Christ, who was more than man, no less God than man, yet he so far yields as to waive his own testimony; and for confirmation of what he had delivered, produces variety of testimonies against which there could be no just, nay, no plausible exception; and he alleges,

1. The testimony of John, ver. 33, which you see, John i. 7, and this he makes use of, not out of any necessity in respect of himself (who being God, and truth itself, needed not the witness of man to testify of him), but out of respect to them, with whom John's testimony was more valid than his own of himself; for John was a burning and shining light, he came both with evidence and power, such as was not altogether ineffectual upon these hardened Jews, ver. 35.

2. The testimony of miracles, this was a real witness. If they could not hear, they might see a testimony, the miraculous power of Christ testifying the truth of his doctrine, and so confirming that he was God, and sent of God. This was the testimony which the Jews required as that wherein they would rest satisfied: 'What sign shewest thou?' ver. 36.

3. The testimony of the Father: ver. 37, 'The Father which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me;' not only by wonders on earth, but by a voice from heaven, Mat. iii. 16, 17. But if ye will not acknowledge that ye have heard his voice, no more than ye have seen his shape, yet there is a further witness that ye cannot, dare not deny; and that is,

4. The testimony of the Scripture, ver. 89. Moses and the prophets, even all that have been from the beginning of the world, they testify that I am the Messias. Now as to the rest, so to this he subjoins an application, and that by way of complaint, ver. 40. Though the Scriptures testify that life is to be had only in the Messias, and though they testify that I am the Messias, in whom only life is to be found, 'yet ye will not come to me,' &c.

Wherein three things are observable: 1. Men's misery out of Christ; they are off from him, dead without him, unwilling to come to him. 2. Men's happiness in Christ; they that find him find life, the sentence of life as to justification, the principles of life spiritual as to sanctification, the comforts of life temporal as to their present enjoyments, the joys of life eternal as to their future condition. 3. Christ's resentment of man's condition; he complains of it, it grieves, it troubles him; he vents his grief to a sad complaint, 'Ye will not come to me.'

Each part affords some fruitful observations, and from man's misery we may collect two very useful doctrines:

I. *Doct.* Men by nature are far from Christ.

II. *Doct.* Men without Christ are unwilling to come unto him.

I. For the first, men by nature are far from Christ. This is clearly implied. What need of coming to him, but that they are at a distance from him? All, every man by nature is so, the Lord speaks this of the Jews, and the apostle witnesses the same of the Gentiles: Acts ii. 39, 'The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off;' the like, Eph. ii. 18, 17. The Jews were nearer in respect of some privileges and enjoyments, but far off in respect of spiritual saving improvement of them. The prodigal is an emblem, a lively representation of both, both Jew and Gentile. We departed from our father's house in Adam, and till the Lord convert us, we, as he, dwell in a far country, at a great distance from Christ, far from him in respect of knowledge, union, participation, converse.

1. In respect of *knowledge*. Far from knowing Christ savingly, effectually, experimentally; far from apprehending such excellency in him as to count all things dross and dung in comparison of him; such necessity of him as to part with sin, self, the world, and all for him; such all-sufficiency in him, as to be content with him in the want, in the loss of all; far from clear knowledge of Christ, as a poor prisoner, locked and bolted in a dark dungeon is far from seeing the light of the day, or as a man stark blind is far from seeing the light of the sun; so, and far more than so, is a natural man from seeing Christ; shut up in darkness, under the power of Satan, having the eyes of his mind blinded by the God of this world, that he cannot see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

2. In respect of *union*. He is far from being united with Christ, from being one with him; wedded to sin, glued to the world, and unwilling to be separated, and so far from Christ, because there can be no contract betwixt Christ and the soul till there be a divorce betwixt the soul and sin, the soul and the world. No league with Christ till the covenant with hell and death, with sin and the world, be broken. Far from faith, which is the bond of this union, shut up under unbelief, and a gravestone laid upon the soul, which nothing can roll away but an almighty power; far from marriage-union with Christ, even as a child yet unborn is far from

the hopes and comforts of a conjugal life and union ; so far are men from Christ, who are yet in the state of nature, not regenerated, not born again.

3. In respect of *participation*. As far from union with the person of Christ, so far from partaking of the benefits of Christ ; far from pardon, being yet under the sentence of condemnation ; from adoption, being yet servants of sin, and slaves to Satan ; from reconciliation, being enemies to Christ in their minds through wicked works ; from sanctification, the old man keeping still possession with a strong hand, and the interest of the flesh and the world prevailing in the soul ; from heaven, there is a great gulf betwixt him and heaven, a gulf deep and large, no passage possible by the act or power of nature. Far from enjoying any of the benefits of Christ's purchase, as he that is in the Indies, without ship or boat, is far from enjoying any comforts or accommodations here with us.

4. In respect of *converse*. A stranger to Christ, far from communion with him ; a stranger to his thoughts, Christ is not his meditation ; his heart is not with him, his affections not on him, his inclinations not towards him, his desires not after him, his delight not in him, his designs not for him ; he lives not to Christ, acts not for him, walks not with him ; Christ is in heaven, and his heart is on the world. As far as heaven is from earth, so far is a natural man from Christ.

*Use.* See here the misery of every man by nature, far from Christ, and consequently near to hell and Satan ; and since man is always in motion, the longer he continues out of Christ, the further he wanders from him. While you are in the state of nature, till ye be converted, till ye be regenerated and born again, till ye be translated out of that state wherein ye were born, wherein ye have lived, this is your condition, ye are far from Christ. Oh sad state, if ye were sensible of it ! There is something of hell in this condition, far from Christ ! It is heaven to be with Christ, it is his presence that makes heaven glorious, it is his presence enjoyed that makes heaven happy ; but to be far from Christ, is to be in hell upon earth ; to be far from Christ, is to be in the suburbs of hell ; when Christ is farthest off, then is hell opened. What is hell, but the state farthest from Christ ? And now if this be your state, if ye be far off from Christ, why there is but a step between you and hell.

Oh the misery of this condition ! If natural men were not possessed with a spirit of slumber, if they were but sensible how miserable this condition is, they would scarce sleep, or eat, or count anything comfortable, while they are in it.

While far from Christ, you are far from comfort, happiness, hopes of either ; you are far from the dearest friend, the sweetest relation you can desire in the world ; far from being rich, however you are provided in the world, for Christ is the only treasure ; far from comforts, however ye solace yourselves in things below ; all your springs of comfort are in Christ. Dig where you will, bitterness will spring up, no pure comforts ; while far from this fountain, far from happiness. Christ is the foundation of all happiness. Ye may delude yourselves with fancies, but you will find it really true, till ye be near to Christ, you are far from happiness, ay, and far from hopes of happiness ; without Christ, without hope ; far from Christ, far from hope : Christ, where he is, is the hope of glory, Col. i. Ye are far from heaven, far from glory, far from hopes of glory, while ye are far from Christ.

Oh then, never rest in this condition, make haste out of the state of nature,

never be at quiet, till ye be converted, born again ; till ye feel the power of Christ's Spirit drawing your souls off from sin and the world, till then ye are far from Christ.

II. *Doct.* Sinners are unwilling to come to Christ. It is evident in the words, Christ complains of it, and he never complains without cause. If this were not so, Christ should wrong them, his complaint would be groundless.

Nothing more true than this, and yet nothing less believed. Indeed, every one will acknowledge this in general, but come to particulars, and inquire, Art thou willing? &c. And you shall scarce find one man that bears the name of a Christian, but he will confidently tell you, he is not only willing to come, but is already with him; even as it was with the Jews, so it is now with most Christians. Those of the people whom the apostle calls Jews outwardly, if one had told them they were unwilling to come to their Messias, they would have looked upon it as a groundless slander, as a most intolerable reproach. What, not we who make it our daily prayer, who live in continual expectation of him, who desire nothing more than to see him in the world? What more false than that we should not be willing to come? And yet nothing was more true; for when Christ the Messias was really in the world, they were so far from coming to him, as they would not receive him when he came to them: 'He came to his own, and they received him not.' So it is with those amongst us who are Christians outwardly. What, are not we willing to come to Christ, who call upon his name, and are called by his name, and expect salvation only by him? This seems a most uncharitable, groundless charge; and yet there are but few (of all that many that profess Christ) that do, or will really come to him; and they are apt to be most confident who are farthest off. They are his own, those who bear his name, to whom Christ comes, and yet they will not receive him: it is the generality of those who are called Christians of whom Christ may complain, 'Ye will not come to me.' They will not come to Christ for spiritual life, they will not come to him at all for the life of holiness and sanctification; and though they seem willing to come to him for pardon and heaven, for judicial and eternal life, yet they are unwilling to come to him even for these in his own way; and as good sit still as not come in Christ's way. He that will walk in his own way towards Christ, he goes from him, not to him. Nothing more clear in Scripture and experience than this, else what needs so many invitations, so much importunity, Isa. lv. 1, Rev. xxii. What needs he cry aloud unto them, Prov. i. 20, but that they are unwilling to hear? What need he send so many messengers? What need so many entreaties and persuasive arguments, 2 Cor. v. 20, but that unwillingness is not easily removed? What needs he come himself to call them? Mat. xviii. 11. Why does he wait so long, and stand without knocking, Rev. iii., if there need be no if, but that men are unwilling? What need so many commands to come, so many threatenings if they do not, Luke xiv. 24, so many exhortations for not coming? What need he take the rod, and whip them home to himself, but that they are loath to come, fair means will not prevail? Why does he weep and sigh at the obstinacy of sinners? Luke xix. 41, 42. To conclude: What needs an almighty power to draw sinners unto him? Are not they unwilling that must be drawn to it?

You see, it is as clear in the Scripture as the sun, that it is so. Let us inquire why it is so, and who they are that are unwilling, that every one

may know what to judge of himself in this particular ; and both these we shall shew with one labour.

1. Many think they are already come to Christ, when indeed they are far from him. They conceive they are come far enough, and therefore are unwilling to come farther, so they sit down short of Christ, and are not willing to come to him. What is the language of men's hearts but this, We profess Christ, are baptized in his name, hope to be saved by him, submit to his ordinances, hear his word, call on his name, and who then can say that we are not come to Christ ? And whereas, alas, many go farther than thus, and yet live and die without Christ, and so far from him as he knows them not ; and so he professeth to the foolish virgins, and to those, Mat. vii. Did not Judas, did not Simon Magus do all this, and more than this ? which yet is all that most can allege to prove they are come to Christ.

Do you come to Christ as a Saviour to deliver you from the wrath to come ? It is well ; but if ye go no further, ye go but half the way to Christ. If you will come home to Christ indeed, you must go to him, not only as a Saviour, but as a Lord ; not only to receive pardon from him, but to be ruled by him ; not only to be saved, but to be sanctified ; not only for happiness, but for holiness too, for Christ is both or neither ; and if ye come for one and not for the other, indeed you come not at all ; you do but delude yourselves with thoughts that you are already come ; Christ will have as much cause to complain of you as of the Jews, ' Ye will not.'

2. Many do not fully apprehend their necessity of Christ. And if they think it unnecessary, no wonder if they be unwilling. But what ignorant wretches are they, you will say, who think it not necessary ? Oh that the greatest number of those that profess Christ were not such ! A little search into the thoughts and ways of men, will discover that there are multitudes who did never thoroughly apprehend what necessity there is of Christ.

Are there not such, who when they sin, think it enough to be sorry for it, to ask God forgiveness, or to be more careful for the future ? Do not some think they make amends for sinning by doing some good work, or falling upon some religious duty after it ? Is not this ordinary, even amongst the better sort of ordinary Christians ? (for some miscreants there are who run on in sin without any remorse at all). Now what necessity of Christ do they apprehend, who can thus satisfy their consciences ? Do such duly apprehend, that the least of those many millions of sins which they are guilty of, deserves eternal torments ? that the justice of God is engaged to inflict those torments for every sin, though it be but a vain thought or idle word ? that justice can never be disengaged from thus punishing such sin, till it be fully satisfied ? that nothing can satisfy justice for the least, but that which is of infinite value ? that none in heaven or earth can offer this to justice, but only Jesus Christ ? If these were truly apprehended, which are the sure truths of the gospel, you would be far from thinking to make amends for the least sin, though you should fast, and pray, and weep for it to all eternity.

There is none but Christ, none but Christ, can satisfy for the least sinful motion that ever was in thy heart. Oh, if men believed Christ thus necessary, they would not only go, but run, but fly to him. You would not work, nor sleep, nor eat in quiet, till you were sure that Christ had satisfied for your sins. Sure when men sin, and are not disquieted ; or, if they be, yet can quiet their consciences with anything in the world but

the application of the blood of Christ, they see not their necessity of Christ, they are not yet come to him.

Further, are there not such who believe they shall be saved because they mean well, and do no man wrong, and give to every one their own, and now and then serve God in some religious duties? They think God is more merciful than to damn such harmless, well-meaning people. Why, but if you can come thus to heaven, what need is there of Christ? Sure you never were convinced of your necessity of Christ, and then it is evident enough you are not yet come to him.

Besides, are there not many who see no need of regeneration, of an universal change in their whole souls? who, if they can restrain their lusts, see no need to endeavour the subduing them? think their natures sufficiently sanctified, if the corruption of them break not forth in gross sins; think the outward performance of religious duties sufficient; see no need of so much zeal, faith, fervency, delight, and spiritualness, and aims at God in the performing them; think it enough if their conversation be honest and civil, though it be not spiritual or heavenly? If these be not the thoughts of most, let your consciences, let your former or present experiences judge. And if it be thus, what need is there of Christ for regeneration or mortification, for exercise of grace or holiness of life? Alas! it is plain here are no due apprehensions how necessary Christ is in all these respects, but here are clear evidences that such never yet came to Christ, no, nor ever yet were willing to come; for since they think it unnecessary, they cannot but be unwilling. Christ has yet cause to complain of such, 'Ye will not come to me.'

They that are come to Christ indeed, have been led to him by the sense of their necessity of him. When sin has wounded the conscience, they fly to him as the wounded, dying man in the wilderness to the brazen serpent; they make haste to him, as the fainting hart hastens to the waters, panting after them.

They know a change in their lives without a change in their hearts, will but leave them as painted sepulchres in God's eye, and none can change their hearts but Christ; therefore they come to him for sanctification. They know it is to little purpose to restrain sin, except it be subdued; and Christ being only able to subdue their lusts, they come to him for strength. They know outward performances are but the carcase of religious duties: the soul of them is the exercise of grace in them; therefore they come to Christ for quickening grace. They know a civil conversation is not enough to adorn the gospel: there is need of Christ to make them spiritual and heavenly; therefore they come to him for it. They know when they have done their best, and put forth their souls to the utmost in holy services, yet they are but unprofitable servants: there is enough in their exactest performances to damn them, and kindle God's displeasure against them; therefore when all is done, they run to Christ for acceptance. Those who never saw these things necessary, nor their necessity of Christ for those ends, were never yet willing to come to Christ.

3. Many are too busy to come to Christ, they have not leisure for such a journey; some busy in following their sports and pastimes; some eager in pursuing their unlawful pleasures; some wholly taken up with the cares of earth, have their hands, and hearts, and heads, so full of the world, as there is little or no room to think of coming, that must be laid aside till more leisure. If Christ call, they bid him have patience, or come another time, when sickness, or old age, or death approaches; then it may be

they will think of it, at present they must be excused, they cannot come.

You have the temper of these men plainly represented in that parable, Luke xiv. The Lord sends to invite many to the marriage-feast, but they all with one consent make excuse. One is too busy about his farm, he must be excused; another is taken up with his marriage, he cannot come; another is employed about his oxen, he must be excused. Thus it is with most to whom the Lord sends the gospel, they are too busy to be saved, too full of employment to mind Christ or their souls.

Though Christ invite them again and again, though he lift up his voice and cry aloud to them in the ministry of the word, yet such a noise does the world make in their ears, they do not hear Christ; he speaks to stocks and stones, no more are they moved by his invitations. Or if there be any resemblance in them of living creatures, the deaf adder is their emblem. which stops his ears though the charmer charm never so wisely.

Though Christ weep, as we read he did in the Gospel, to see such wretched unkindness unto him, and such strange cruelty to their own souls, yet they regard not; their eyes are so fixed upon other things, that though Christ be held forth to them as a man of sorrows, yet they mind him not, they hid their faces from him.

Though Christ knock at the door of their hearts, and stand there knocking from Sabbath to Sabbath, by his word and Spirit, yet they are so taken up with entertaining the world and their lusts, as they have no leisure to mind him; knock he may, and stand knocking till his head be wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, yet they will not open. Or if his importunity make them listen, yet usually he gets no other answer, no other return than this, We are not now at leisure, trouble us not now; come another time and we may hear thee. Oh brethren, is not this the language of those delays wherewith ye put off Christ from time to time? Oh take heed lest he who now complains, but ye will not hear, be provoked to turn his complaint into that dreadful threatening, Because ye will not come to me for life, ye shall die in your sins. And that leads me to the

4. Many will not part with that which keeps them at a distance from Christ. They will not part with sin to come to Christ, and there is no coming to him without turning from that; these two are the opposite terms of this motion, &c. Now this is the condition of most that hear the gospel, they have one sin, if not more, which they cannot endure to part with. If Christ and my sin may be joined together, says the sinner, then with all my heart I will accept of Christ's invitation, I will come to him; but if there be no coming to Christ without parting from my sin, oh this is a hard task, a hard saying, I know not how to live without my sin; and thus he leaves Christ.

This is the fatal rock upon which millions of sinners have shipwrecked their souls, and lost eternal life and Christ together. They are wedded to sin, and will live separated from Christ rather than be divorced from their lusts, for there is no enjoying of these together. It is as possible to reconcile light and darkness, or join heaven and hell together, as to join sin and Christ together in one soul; the ways of sin, and the way to Christ, are as far distant as heaven and earth. You may as well expect to have your bodies both in heaven and earth at once, as to have your souls act sin and come to Christ together; no serving of these two masters. Now, because there is no coming to Christ without turning from sin, and most

have no mind to part with sin, hence Christ has cause to complain of so many, 'Ye will not come unto me.'

5. Many are possessed with prejudice against Christ, as represented in the gospel, and offered in the ministry of it; and this prejudice renders them unwilling to come to him. This was that rock of offence at which the Jews stumbled, and so fell short of Christ; they expected another kind of Messiah than Christ appeared to be when he offered himself to them; they looked for a Messiah in the garb of a temporal monarch, to reign amongst them in worldly glory, and to subdue all nations to them by the force of secular power, and to make their country the head of the world's empire. This appears in that petition of the mother of Zebedee's children. Nay, the disciples themselves were possessed with this conceit, as is manifest by their question, Acts i. 6, 'Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' Now, Christ not answering their expectation, but appearing in the form of a servant, disclaiming all secular jurisdiction, and professing that his kingdom was not of this world, that he came not to rule, but to minister, not to reign, but to suffer, hereupon the carnal Jews were filled with prejudice against him, rejected him, hid their faces from him, and would not come to him as the Messiah.

Thus it is now with the carnal professors of the gospel; because Christ answers not their expectation (though not the same, yet altogether as groundless as that of the Jews), therefore they entertain prejudice against Christ as represented in the gospel, and so they will not entertain Christ; they are unwilling to come to him; they expect a Saviour that should let them live quietly in their sins, and be indulgent to them in their sinful, voluptuous, licentious courses, and yet should bring them to heaven when they can live in sin no longer. But now, when the gospel represents Christ as one who requires strictness and holiness in all his followers, who calls for mortification and estrangement from the world in all that come to him, who tells them they must suffer any evil rather than sin, and take up the cross if they will have him for their Christ; when the gospel offers a crucified Christ, one whom nothing will please but that holiness, purity, strictness, which the world scorns and derides; one whom tribulation, persecution, reproaches, will attend in all his followers; hearing this, presently they are offended, prejudice seizes on their souls; This is not the Christ, say they in their hearts, that we expected; this is a Christ of some precisers men's setting up; we will not come to him for life. The Lord, who is the searcher of hearts, knows and sees such secret motions as these in the hearts of most who bear the name of Christ, but will not own him, close with him, as the gospel offers him, but separate Christ from holiness, from sufferings, from which he is not separable. Thus you see why so many will not come to Christ, and who they are.

*Use 1;* of information. See here the wretchedness of man's nature, take notice of it, and let it be particularly applied. Every man, Jew and Gentile, pagan or Christian, is by nature unwilling to come to Christ; and oh what wretchedness is this! Ye are all by nature far from Christ, far from happiness and life; we are all, till converted and regenerated, in the jaws of death, in the gulf of miseries; all spiritually dead, and the sentence of eternal death passed upon us. The Lord has awarded this heavy sentence not only in the law, but in the gospel, John iii. 18, 36.

And as we are thus miserable, so are we unable utterly to free ourselves from it. Nay, all the powers in heaven and earth cannot revoke this sentence, cannot draw us out of this misery; none in heaven or earth but



Christ; and yet, though our life and death be in the hands of Christ, though our eternal happiness or misery depend upon our coming or not coming to Christ, yet we had rather die and perish than come to him for happiness; rather die in our sins, than come to him for life.

Christ has now, or has had formerly, cause to complain of every one, Thou wilt not come to me, &c. And if Christ have such cause to complain of us, what reason have we to complain of ourselves. Oh the wretchedness of this my nature! oh the desperate depravedness of this heart, that has been, nay, that is, may most say, so unwilling to come. Oh what woeful, what hellish perverseness lodges in this soul, that will use so many excuses, put him off with so many delays, nay, give him plain refusals, when he invites thee, beseeches thee, urges thee with all importunity to come to him for life! I cannot part with my sin, says one, and there is no coming to him without parting from it. I cannot endure that holiness, that strictness (nor none of my companions), says another. I shall be jeered, derided, forsaken, and Christ will not endure me without it. I am well enough as I am, says another; I thank God I am no drunkard, adulterer, extortioner, &c., and what need I go farther? I have time little enough to provide for myself and family, says another; I cannot spare time for prayer, self-examination, mortifying duties, as Christ requires. I may come hereafter, says another; at what time soever I repent and turn to him, he will receive me, and there is time enough before I die. Thus men put off Christ with such pleas and excuses as the devil and their corrupt hearts suggest. And what need is there of any other argument to prove that our natures are desperately wicked above all expression! Such an averseness is in them unto Christ, as you will rather die than come to him. Nor fear of death, nor desire of life itself, can make men willing to come to Christ. Christ himself could not prevail with many sinners to make them willing, though he preached divers years together, and made this the chief scope of his sermons, and spoke so to this purpose as never man spake, yet all that he could say or do was not effectual with the greatest part of those that heard him. Hence he concludes his sermons sometimes with complaints, sometimes with tears, Luke xiii. 34, Mat. xxiii. 37. So few did he prevail with, as he expostulates in the Prophet as though they were none at all, Isaiah liii. 1, applied to this purpose, John xii. 37, 38, and elsewhere, Isaiah lrv. 2, and xlix. 4. Such obstinacy did Christ meet with against himself, and such will his messengers meet with. This is a lamentation, and will be a lamentation, and oh that every one would lament the wretchedness of his own nature! and then the servants of God would have less cause to weep in secret that Christ's message is so fruitless. We abhor toads and serpents, and such creatures, who seem to be made for the mischief and ruin of others; how much more should we loathe our poisonous mischievous natures, which, by their obstinacy against Christ, shew we are worse than these, as tending not only to the mischief of others, but are obstinately bent to ruin themselves. We abhor the devil for making it his work to devour souls, but are not our natures, till renewed, worse devils to ourselves, being more unwilling to come to Christ for life than Satan is desirous to push us on in the ways of death? May ye not find a toad, a serpent, a devil, or that which is as bad in this respect, in your own bosoms? Oh, bewail the rebellion of your natures against Christ, be ashamed to say or think that you have good natures. And if there were nothing but this, it is sufficient to confound this conceit, and to make you ashamed and confounded for it.

You are by nature unwilling to come to Christ, had rather die than come to Christ for life.

*Use 2. Examination.* Since sinners, for\* the greatest part of men are unwilling, it concerns every one of you to try whether ye be in the number of those who are not willing; that is a most undoubted truth, if that be such which truth itself speaks, and yet who is there that believes it as to himself? It is not easy to determine whether it be more difficult to persuade men to be willing, or to persuade men that they are unwilling to come to Christ. All will easily assent to this in general, sinners are unwilling, but come to particulars, and ask, Art thou unwilling? and most will deny it, and with detestation; I was willing to come to Christ ever since I heard of him; he is unworthy to live, unworthy to be counted a Christian, that will not come to Christ; thus will every one be ready to answer. And as this is an evidence that these confidants never yet came, so it is one great impediment that hinders them from coming. The way to remove this dangerous obstruction in your way to Christ is to be convinced of your unwillingness, and the way to get this conviction is to put yourselves upon serious trial whether ye be willing or no; and this is the intention of this present application, to direct you how to know this.

If ye be willing to come to Christ, you are already come, for there is nothing stands betwixt Christ and a sinner but this unwillingness; as soon as you are willing, you are with him.

Now, whether ye be come to Christ, ye may upon serious trial know by these particulars. Those that come to Christ,

1. Are sorry that they were so long ere they came to him; they know when they were without Christ in the world, they remember when Christ strove with them in his word, by his Spirit, and they resisted, as others do; but now, being by his almighty power drawn to him, they know by experience what they lost by living without him, they are sensible how they provoked and dishonoured Christ by slighting his invitings, neglecting his entreaties, resisting his motions; this is their grief, their sorrow; so it was with the prodigal when he was come home to his father, the first thing that bewrays itself is grief, remorse, for departing from, neglecting to return to him: 'I have sinned,' &c. Their unkindness pierces them, that they kept Christ so long out, that they suffered him so long to stand knocking at their hearts, striving by his Spirit, beseeching them in his word, yet they excluded him, closed their hearts against him. Oh, says the soul, what a wretched rebel was I, who, when Christ stretched out his hands all the day, I refused; when he called, entreated, I would not answer; when he drew me, I resisted! Oh, what love, what indulgence, what kindness was this! and what wretched unkindness was mine! This melts the soul into sorrow. Oh, how happy might I have been long ago if I had yielded to his motions! What a wretch was I, to choose rather to feed on husks than to be entertained with the pleasures of a father's house, than to feed on those delights which communion with Christ affords. If this be your temper, it is a good evidence you are come; but those who say they never were unwilling to come to Christ, they came to him ever since they can remember, have reason to suspect they are not yet come.

2. They are acquainted with the way to Christ. Those that have walked in that way do know it by experience, they have clear, distinct discoveries of the multitude and heinousness of their sins, have been apprehensive of the wrath of God due to them for their sins, have been sensible of their

\* Qu. 'far'?—ED.

misery by reason of sin and wrath, even as a man sinking under a burden is sensible of the weight thereof; have been hereupon convinced of an absolute necessity of Christ, even as the man pursued for slaughter under the law saw his need of the city of refuge, so as he must die if he did not without delay get into it; felt their hearts drawn out in ardent desires after Christ, so as their souls could say of Christ as she of children, Give us Christ, or else we die; and upon this have been drawn to consent to take Christ upon his own terms, to part with all the Lord requires, submit to all he enjoins, undergo all that he will inflict, so as he might enjoy Christ; cares not what he want, so as he may have him; cares not what he lose, so he may gain him. This is the way whereby the Lord brings sinners to Christ. If ye know this way by experience, you are come to Christ indeed; but if strangers to it, you are not come.

8. They have a high esteem of him. While the soul is afar off, as all are by nature, he sees little of Christ, and enjoys less, and his esteem of Christ is answerable; he is apt to ask, 'What is thy beloved?' sees no such beauty nor comeliness in him but that other things may have his affections, tastes no such sweetness in him, but that the pleasures of sin are as delightful; and no wonder, for he is at a great distance, and so cannot see and taste that which is afar off; but when he is come to Christ, he sees such beauty and excellency in him as darkens all outward excellencies, makes them seem dross compared with Christ; so did Paul when he was found in him, Phil. iii., *οὐ βάλαι*, those things which he formerly admired were now not counted worthy to have place in thoughts or affections; he cast them out, as more fit for dogs than for that heart which had entertained Christ.

Now the soul wonders at his former blindness, that he could see so little of excellency in Christ, when there is (as now he sees) so infinitely much, now he tastes that the Lord is gracious. He had heard of him before but by the hearing of the ear, and his apprehensions were suitable, such as a blind man has of the sun when he hears a discourse in commendation of that which he never saw; but now his eye sees him, and his eye affects his heart, and his heart is filled with admiration of him, as the chiefest of ten thousand, as fairer than the children of men; worthy of all his love, if his heart could be all turned into love; worthy of his highest thoughts, if his thoughts could be raised to the pitch of the angels; worthy of all his praises, if his lips could speak nothing but praises to all eternity. Who is like to thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, in beauty, in all transcendent excellencies! wonderful in love, in sweetness, and all delights! Thus does he esteem Christ, who is come to him. Those who are so taken with vain delights, sinful pleasures, as they can forego the sweetness of communion with Christ, or know not what this is, who dare usually sin away Christ's favour for worldly advantage, shew they esteem him not, are not come to him.

4. They are in a new condition. He that comes to him, comes, as it were, into a new world; 'old things are passed away, all things are made new.' He finds such a change, as a man who has lived many years in darkness finds when he is brought into the light; so it is expressed, Col. i. 18. He has new thoughts and new affections, new companions and new employments, a new heart and a new life. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;' can say as Augustine, *Ego non sum ego*, I am not the man I was. If no such inward and outward change, you are not yet come to Christ.

5. They walk with Christ. That is the end of their coming; formerly

they had fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, now their fellowship is with the Father and with the Son; formerly, they had their conversations in the world, now their conversation is in heaven, now they know what it is, as Enoch, to walk with God; communion with Christ is no mystery, experience has made them acquainted with it, their mind is with Christ, he is their meditation, their thoughts are of him, they prevent the night-watches, and when they awake, they are continually with him; their hearts are on Christ, he is their love, delight, desire; the bent of their wills is towards him, and so carried with strong inclination, they live to him, act for him, aim at him, depend on him. If it be not thus with you in some degree, you are not come to Christ.

6. They are at a greater distance from sin and the world. For this motion is betwixt these terms, it is a passage from sin and the world to Christ; as when they lived in sin they were at a distance from Christ, so when they are come to Christ they are at a greater distance from sin; as when they were wedded to the world they were separated from Christ, so now when they are married to Christ, they are divorced from the world, they are estranged from it when acquainted with him; crucified to them when alive unto Christ.

7. They have renounced their own righteousness. So Paul, Philip. iii. 9, '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.'

*Use 3*; of exhortation. Then it is the duty of all that the Lord has persuaded to come, to endeavour to persuade others, to strive against this unwillingness in their several places and relations. You that are entrusted with children, &c., have the charge of servants, you that have any dear friend or relation, who you suspect are yet far from Christ, oh use all means, motives, to persuade them to come to Christ, strive against it in yourselves, and in all with whom you converse; this is a common duty, but the special charge of it lies upon ministers; it is their office, they are sent and authorised by Christ for this purpose, 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. Now that I may discharge this trust, let me propound some motives and inducements, which, through the concurrence of God, may be effectual to make you willing, and these drawn from—1, necessity; 2, advantage; 3, equity; 4, danger.

1. Consider what necessity there is. You cannot look upon anything, but, if duly weighed, will convince you of this necessity. Look upon heaven or hell, upon this world or the world to come, upon present enjoyments or future hopes, upon mercy or justice, upon the word of God or his works, look upon what you will, you may see an absolute necessity to make haste to Christ; look upon heaven that is shut up against you; upon hell that is set open to swallow you, till you come to him who has the key of David, &c.; look upon this world, there is nothing will afford you comfort; upon the world to come, there is nothing but endless torment; here nothing but a world of vexatious vanities, hereafter nothing but a world of eternal miseries, till you come to Christ, who is a world of comforts here, a world of blissful enjoyments hereafter; look upon present enjoyments, they are all cursed; upon future hopes, and they are all blasted, till you come to Christ, by whom the sinner's curse is slain, and his hopes revived; look upon mercy, that cannot save you; upon justice, that is engaged to destroy you, till you come to Christ, in whom mercy is magnified, justice satisfied; look upon the word, that does nothing but threaten you; upon his works,

they are nothing but the executions of God's threatenings upon you, till you come to Christ, who makes all the word of God as sweet expressions of love, as a promise, and all the works of God acts of mercy. But more fully thus, till you come to Christ.

(1.) You are under the power of Satan. You are his children, his members, his vassals. The interest of Christ and Satan divide the whole world: there is the world of sinners, and Satan is the god of this world; there is the world of believers, and Christ is the king of this world. Till ye come to Christ, ye belong to Satan really, however in word ye may disclaim him; he that is not with Christ is against him, joins with his mortal enemy, fights under Satan's colours against Christ and his interest, even when he thinks he does Christ service; so Paul before his conversion.

Till ye come to Christ, you are under the power of darkness, you are one of the kingdom of Satan; he rules you, works in you, tyrannises over you. You are in more grievous bondage to him, than the Israelites under Pharaoh, for it is soul-slavery, a bondage that you are not sensible of, that you will not believe, though the Lord in Scripture aver it over and over. Hence this coming to Christ is described by a turning from Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. If sinners perceived their slavery, they might seek to escape; Satan, to make sure work, deals with you as the Philistines did with Samson, he puts out your eyes. Thus woeful is your slavery; your souls are enslaved, and slaves you are to the worst of tyrants, to Satan, till ye come to Christ. Oh is there not necessity to haste out of this condition! Had you rather serve Satan in cruel bondage, than come to Christ for liberty? rather sit in darkness, in the confines of hell, under that hellish taskmaster, than come to Christ for redemption, and be partaker of the glorious liberty of the sons of God?

(2.) You are under the guilt of sin. You have done nothing but sinned since ye came into the world; every of your thoughts, words, deeds, have been sins against God. And of all these numberless millions of sins, not one of them is pardoned, nor ever will be pardoned, till ye come to Christ; there is as much guilt lies upon every of your souls, as is sufficient to sink a soul into hell, and not the weight of one dram that can be removed, till ye come to Christ. Oh you cannot long bear up under such a burden; there is but a cobweb life betwixt you and sinking. If you make not haste to Christ to lay the burden on him, it will certainly press you down into the lower hell. All your sins are in continual remembrance with God: they are set in the light of his countenance, they are in his eye as writ with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond; this handwriting will never be cancelled, these sins will never be blotted out of his remembrance, except you come to Christ; all the dishonour, injuries, affronts you have offered the Lord, will be continually in his eye, till ye come to Christ to interpose. Oh what need is there to make haste! As you have lived, so ye will die in your sins.

(3.) You are under the wrath of God. He is your enemy: the Lord of hosts is his name; his anger is kindled against you. He is angry with the wicked every day; his indignation burns like fire; he loathes your persons, he abhors your services; all you do adds but more fuel to that flame which will scorch you here, but will burn to the bottom of hell, except ye come to Christ to quench it; it is he only that has slain this enmity, it is he only that has brought you righteousness. Oh fly out of this condition, as you would fly from everlasting burnings! Make haste to Zoar; look not back till ye come to the mountains, lest you perish by fire from heaven, lest the

wrath of God consume you ; your sins have kindled it ; it burns so as none can quench it but Christ only. Oh look upon this warning as that message from heaven to Lot's family ! Your natural condition is a Sodom ; if you slight this warning, as Lot's sons-in-law, Gen. xix. 14, you will certainly, like them, be consumed in the iniquity of that state. God has prepared Christ, a Zoar for the safety of his chosen ones ; and now hear the Lord speaking by me, as he spake to Lot, ver. 17, Escape, poor sinner, for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in this condition ; escape to the mountain, fly to Christ, lest thou be consumed.

(4.) You are under the curse, Gal. iii. 10, Deut. xxix. 19. All the curses of the law are levelled against you, all the threatenings of the Lord fall heavy on you, till ye come to Christ ; there is not one word in all the book of God that speaks the least comfort to a sinner out of Christ ; you cannot strike the least spark of hope out of any expression in the word of God, till you come to Christ ; whatever curses and threatenings you meet with, they are yours ; whatever comforts or promises you meet with, you have no more to do with them than with your neighbour's inheritance. The word is the last will and testament of God in Christ, wherein he has left every man his portion, his legacy. Now look this will over, from the first line to the last, and you will find nothing bequeathed to you in this condition but a curse. Oh sad legacy ! Esau lift up his voice and wept, yea, and cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, because his father did not leave him a blessing equal with his brother Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 34, 38. But how would Esau have cried, have wept, if his father had left him nothing but a curse ! Why, this is all the inheritance of those who will not come to Christ ; they have no other portion by this will but the Lord's curse. If you will have any better portion, you must come to Christ for it ; if ye will inherit the blessing, if ye will be heirs of the promise, ye must be adopted in Christ ; till then, the curse, the threatening is your inheritance. Oh make haste out of this cursed condition, fly to Christ, who has borne the curse, and purchased title to the promise, for all that come to him !

(5.) The justice of God is engaged to destroy you. As sure as God is just, all that come not to Christ must perish. Observe it, the mercy of God, infinite mercy, cannot save you, except you will come to Christ, for the justice of God must be satisfied before any sinner, any offender can find mercy ; and none can satisfy justice but Christ, and he satisfies for none but those that come to him. God will never be so merciful as to violate his justice. Now, God would be untrue, unfaithful, unjust if he should spare, if he should save, any sinner that comes not to Christ. If you think God will be merciful to you (unless ye come to Christ, and upon his own terms, so as to forsake sin, renounce your own righteousness, and give up yourselves to holiness), you make an idol of God, and conceive not of him as he is, but represent him to be a God according to your own fancy and likeness, an image of your own forming, not the true God. God will cease to be God if he save a sinner that continues in sin, and will not come to Christ. Justice stands betwixt heaven and every sinner, there is no entering there till justice be satisfied ; if you come not to Christ who tenders it, the Lord will require satisfaction at your hands, and you must pay it in hell to the utmost farthing. This is your condition, mercy cannot save you, justice will seize on you, except ye come to Christ ; and is there not need to make haste ? But though a man without Christ (may some say) be thus miserable in respect of his spiritual and eternal state, yet there is some comfort for him in respect of his temporal estate, he has

many outward enjoyments wherein he may solace himself. No; even in these, which are his only support, he is miserable. For,

(6.) His outward enjoyments and accommodations in the world are uncomfortable, unsanctified, accursed. Nothing is sanctified to an unbeliever, Tit. i. 15; and if not sanctified, then not blessed; and if not blessed, then accursed, and so they are in all they enjoy, Deut. xxviii. 15, 16, &c. Outward things are indifferent in themselves, but are to be judged blessings or curses by their rise and issue. If they proceed from the love of God, and tend to the spiritual good of the enjoyers, they become blessings, otherwise they prove curses. And so they are to those that will not come to Christ; the Lord gives them in anger, and when they are lost, he takes them away in his wrath; and when they are continued, they are continual snares, harden them in wickedness; they abuse them as provisions of lust, use them as occasions of sin, and so aggravate their condemnation; and hereby treasuring more wrath against the day of wrath, instead of laying up a good foundation for the time to come; and so bear an impression of wrath with them all along, in their beginning, increase, continuance, departure. Thus it will be with you and all your enjoyments till ye come to enjoy Christ. But if their condition without Christ be so sad and lamentable, how is it (may some say) that they live in so much mirth and jollity? Who more pleasant usually than sinners without Christ? It may seem strange indeed, yea, an astonishment, especially for those that live under the gospel; but consider one instance, and the wonder will cease. Have you never seen distracted men in Bedlam or elsewhere? They laugh, and sing, and dance, as though no men were so happy as themselves, no condition so pleasing and comfortable as theirs. And why are they so merry in such a sad state? Alas! they know not what their condition is, they are beside themselves, and are not sensible what they are or do. Thus it is with sinners out of Christ, they are just like the prodigal, of whom it is said, when he thought of returning to his father, 'he came to himself,' Luke xv. 17; implying that before he was willing to return, he was beside himself. And so is every sinner, while he is unwilling to return to Christ he is beside himself. No wonder if he be so full of mirth when his condition is so sad and lamentable. Alas! he is a distracted soul, he has lost his senses, all spiritual sense; he knows not, he is not sensible, what he does, nor what his soul's condition is, and this is the height of a sinner's misery without Christ; though he be miserable beyond apprehension, yet he is not in the least apprehensive how miserable he is. And this shews what necessity you have to come to Christ, even such need as a distracted man has of an expert physician. Till ye come to Christ, ye are, in a spiritual sense, beside yourselves. And if these considerations draw you not to Christ, it will be an evident symptom of this madness. Till you come to Christ, you are under the power of Satan, the guilt of sin, the wrath of God, the curse of the law; justice is engaged to destroy you, and so engaged as mercy cannot save you; nor can any outward enjoyment afford you the least true comfort. Oh, then, if ye be not quite without sense of your miserable condition, make haste to Christ, resolve to close with him upon his own terms; give no rest to your souls till ye come to Christ and find rest in him.

2. The advantage. As the necessity should force you, so the sweet and precious advantages you will gain hereby should allure you to come to Christ. As soon as you are with him, all the fore-mentioned miseries will instantly vanish.

Come to Christ, and he will free you from the power of Satan, he will knock off those fetters wherewith Satan has loaded your souls; he will judge the prince of this world who does now tyrannise over you, tumble him down from his throne, and make him your footstool. Ye shall be no longer slaves of Satan, but the sons and daughters of the Most High; this shall be your honour, your liberty: 'If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed,' John viii. 36.

Come to Christ, and he will free you from the guilt of sin, he will tell your souls, himself has borne your iniquities on his body upon the tree; those sins that come now in remembrance before God shall be remembered no more; they are now before God's face, but then they shall be cast behind his back; they are now open to his view, but then they shall be covered. Come to him, he has loved you, he will wash you from your sins in his blood; come to him, his name is 'Jesus, he will save his people from their sins.'

Come to Christ, and he will make your peace with God, he will slay that enmity which is betwixt the Lord and your souls, he will quench that wrath which threatens to consume you; though he seem now to be all in a flame against you, yet then will he say, 'Anger is not in me;' that cloud of displeasure will be scattered, and the light of his pleasing countenance will shine on your souls.

Come to Christ, and there shall be no more curse; all the threatenings shall be turned into promises; then you may look upon threatenings without dread or terror; Christ has satisfied them, you may draw the sweetness of a promise out of them. Then you are in covenant with God, in the covenant of grace; and all the promises are so many articles of that covenant which the blood of Christ has sealed to be yours.

Come to Christ, and then justice itself will be your friend; that which stood before as a cherubim at the way of paradise, with a flaming sword to keep you out of heaven, will then be your security, and conduct you thither. He that comes to Christ has as much security for his happiness from the justice as from the mercy of God; Christ has engaged both for all that come to him, 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.

Come to Christ, and then all your outward enjoyments will be comforts, blessings indeed, sweetened by the love of Christ, sanctified by the blood of Christ, ordered by the wisdom and power of Christ, to make your lives truly comfortable and serviceable here, and happy and glorious hereafter. Death will be no more in the pot, nor fly in the box of ointment, when you are in Christ. When Moses had cast the tree which the Lord shewed him into the waters of Marah, the bitter waters immediately were made sweet, Exod. xv. 25. When Christ mixes himself with your enjoyments, their bitterness is past, they then become sweet and comfortable indeed. Nay, your very crosses and afflictions shall then be sweeter than the sweetest enjoyments of sinners without Christ. 'All things,' Rom. viii.; these shall work for your good, spiritual, eternal, whereas their prosperity shall tend to their ruin; you shall have cause to rejoice and be exceeding glad when men persecute you, &c., whereas they shall have cause to mourn and lament, even when their corn, wine, and oil increase. These are some of those sweet advantages that you reap by being willing to come to Christ. And oh that the Lord would persuade you to be willing, that you would go hence with resolutions never more to give Christ occasion to complain, 'Ye will not come to me,' &c.

Particularly, the advantages you will gain by coming to Christ I will



reduce to three heads: union to, communion with, participation of Christ. Come to Christ, and you shall be

(1.) *United to him, one with him.* This is Christ's aim in inviting you, this he desires, this he prays for, John xvii. 20, 21. He invites you, not to your prejudice or disparagement, but to make you happy and glorious; and whereby can you become more happy and glorious, than by being one with him who is the King of glory, the spring of happiness? What greater glory can a poor worm aspire to, than to become a member of Christ, to be a member of that glorious head which is advanced in heavenly places, far above all principality, &c., Eph. i. 20, 21. And what greater happiness than flows from this union! When you are come to Christ, you are as near, as dear to him, as any members of your bodies are to yourselves, Eph. v. 29, 30. Then not only your souls, but your bodies, are members of him, 1 Cor. vi. 15.

And though this union be mystical (not gross, carnal, you must not so conceive of it), yet will it interest you in as much love and tenderness from Christ as though it were corporal. Christ has given a real demonstration of it; he loved his mystical body, the members of it, more than his own natural body, more than any, nay, more than all the parts and members of it; for he gave his natural body, and exposed it in all parts, to wounds, and tortures, and death, rather than his spiritual members should suffer their deserts. Now when we give one thing for another, that for which we give it is more loved and valued than that which we give for it. Even so Christ shewed, by giving himself for his people, that he more loved, more valued them than he did his own body. This will be the sweet issue of your coming to Christ, you will hereby become one of his members, he will be no less tender over you than of his own body. Of what part is any man more tender than his eye? Come to Christ, and the Lord will count you as dear to him as his eye, as the tenderest part of it, 'the apple of his eye,' Zech. ii. 8.

Come to Christ, and you shall be admitted to such union with him, such a relation to him, as will not only engage his tenderness and love, but his joy and delight. You are now the bond-slaves of sin and Satan, but come to him, and he will espouse you to himself, 2 Cor. xi. 2. You are now in league with hell and death, but come to him, and he will join you to himself in an everlasting covenant, a marriage-covenant, that shall never be broken, nor you ever divorced. Now you are loathsome in his eye, by reason of the pollution of sin, but then shall the King, the King of glory, greatly desire your beauty, Ps. xlv. 11. Even when ye see cause to loathe and abhor yourselves, yet then shall ye be the joy and delight of Christ: 'As the Bridegroom rejoiceth,' &c., Isa. lxii. 5. Now you are forsaken and cast off, but then you shall be the Lord's *Hephzibah*, his *Beulah*, his spouse, his delight, ver. 4. Now you are viler in his account than the vilest creatures, than the beasts that perish; then you shall be as a crown of glory, a royal diadem, ver. 8; and though ye be now blind and lame in a spiritual sense, poor, deformed, miserable, and naked, enough to discourage any apprehensive soul from expecting such wonderful love, such glorious privileges, such a high relation, yet is there no just cause of discouragement, if ye be but willing to come to him. He looks not you should bring with you a portion, or beauty, or parts, or relations: all that Christ requires is but your consent; consent but to come, and the match is made, your Redeemer will be your husband, Isa. liv. 5. The love of the most affectionate husband in the world will be nothing, compared with the love of Christ to those

who are willing to come to him. Hence Christ's love is made the pattern of conjugal love, Eph. v. 25. The copy here, when best drawn, comes far short of the original; the love of the conjugal relation is but a shadow of Christ's love, ver. 32. Thus shall it be done to the man who will come to Christ. And is there nothing of all this that will make you willing to come to him?

(2.) *Communion with Christ.* That communion which, when perfectly enjoyed, is the height of happiness in heaven; and as vouchsafed here, is the beginnings of heaven on earth; a privilege to have it with angels; such communion as is betwixt head and members, such as is betwixt dear and intimate friends. No such distance, estrangement between Christ and you as formerly, but a blessed intercourse, a sweet intimacy, a holy familiarity. He will walk with you, you converse with him; he will confer with you, you may speak to him, Eph. iii. 12. He will visit you, and you may have some access to him; he will feast you, and you may entertain him, Rev. iii. 20.

Oh what an high privilege is this! Are you not willing to come to Christ upon such terms? He will admit you to speak to him, as a man to his friend. You may empty all your grievances into his bosom, who is merciful and gracious; you may ask counsel of him in all straits, who is the 'wonderful Counsellor;' you may desire supply of all wants of him, who has all power in heaven and earth to supply, and is as willing as you can desire, John xv. 17. Oh what is it to have Christ dwelling in you, walking with you, communing with you, speaking to your hearts, leading you as it were by the hand in all your ways, bearing you in his arms when you are weak, guiding you by his eye when you are to seek, lifting you above difficulties which you cannot else overcome, standing by you when all forsake you, supporting you in all pressures, comforting you in all tribulations, arming you against assaults; in a word, to have an all-sufficient Saviour to be all in all to you, in a way of sweet communion, and this for ever, John vi. 37. This, even such communion does Christ offer you, if you be but willing to come to him.

(3.) *Participation of him.* Come, and you shall partake of all that Christ can communicate, and man can receive. Satan and sin will promise much to stay you from him, but though they promise more than ever they perform, yet they cannot promise so much as Christ will really give. Upon condition you will come, you shall have all that Christ can give you, and what cannot he give, who is Lord of heaven and earth, and has the disposing of all in both! You shall have all that heart can desire, Job vi., provided you desire nothing but what is good for you, nothing but what is truly desirable; you shall have all. All what? you will say. Why, all that Christ is, all that he has; all that he has done, and is doing, and all that he has suffered: all these, so far as they are communicable, and you capable; all this, if you will but come for it.

All that he is. Is he God? He will be your God, and this is infinitely more than if I should tell you, that all the kingdoms of the earth shall be yours. Is he man? Then you shall know that he was made man for your sakes, that he stooped so low as to become man, that he might raise you to the enjoyment of God. Is he Mediator, God and man in one person? Then you shall find that he is your Mediator, for your sakes to take up the differences betwixt God and your souls; he was both, that God and you might be at one. Is he a king? Then you shall know that for this end he came to the kingdom, that you might be advanced, and he might be the ruin of your enemies. Is he a prophet? Then you shall find him to

be your prophet, to let you know the mind of God, and teach you the way to life. Is he a priest? Then it will appear it is for your sake, that he might be a sacrifice for your sins. In these respects principally the Scriptures declare to us what Christ is, and in all these he will be yours, if you be willing. If this be not enough, here is more than all this: come to Christ, and you shall have

All that he has. Christ, I told you, will marry those that come to him, and this shall be the dowry, all that he has, which is communicable to the creatures; all those riches which the apostles calls unsearchable, Eph. iii. 8. That which is his shall be yours, he will withhold nothing that you are capable to receive; his righteousness is yours, Rom. v. 18. Christ's own robe shall cover you, Isa. lxi. 10. Then you need not be afraid or ashamed to stand in the sight of God, this robe will hide all your deformities; whereas they that want it will call to the mountains to fall on them, and the hills to cover them, rather than appear before him who sits on the throne. His holiness, the ornament of his human nature, and the resemblance of his divine excellency, John i. 16, hence called the divine nature, 2 Peter i.; his peace yours, John xiv. 27; the peace of Christ shall be yours, and that is the peace of God, Philip. iv. 7; his joy, John xv. 11 and xvii. 13, their joy is the joy of the Lord; his glory, John xvii. 22, the glory wherewith Christ as man shall be glorious in heaven, those that come to him shall partake of hereafter; his kingdom, those who upon Christ's invitations will come to him on earth, shall hear that sweet invitation of Christ hereafter, Mat. xxv. 84, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,' &c.; the same kingdom where Christ reigns shall be your inheritance hereafter, Luke xxii. 29, 30; his throne, Rev. ii. 21; those that come at Christ's invitation shall not only be admitted to his table, but to his throne; not only sit, but reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12; the poorest sinner that will come to Christ shall be crowned with royal majesty, and reign gloriously with Christ for ever and ever;—all these are yours if you will come to Christ. And is there no power in all these to make you willing?

Nay, further, more than all this,

All that he has done is done in your stead, or in your behalf, or for your advantage; all that he did on earth, and all that he is doing in heaven, it is all for those, and only for those, that come unto him.

His observance of the law yours. You will then find, that 'he was made under the law, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in you,' Rom. viii. 34. That shall be as available to entitle you to eternal life, offered in that first covenant, 'Do this and live,' as if you had perfectly done it in person.

His miracles yours, *i. e.*, for you to ascertain the truth of that doctrine, of those promises, which are your evidences for all the happiness you can expect here or hereafter.

His prayers yours. They shall be as effectual for you as if he had prayed for you by name, or as if he were now on earth to pray for you, John xvii. 20. And oh how precious, how invaluable is interest in those prayers!

His resurrection yours. Those that come to Christ are risen with Christ, Col. iii. 1. Then you shall know that he rose from the dead, that you might be raised out of the grave of sin, to sit with him in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 5, 6.

His ascension yours. Then you shall find he ascended to prepare for your entertainment in heaven, to make ready those mansions of glory where you shall mutually enjoy one another to all eternity, John xiv. 2, 3.

His intercession yours. As he lived on earth to act for you, so he ever lives in heaven to make intercession, Heb. vii. 25. No plea shall be admitted against them, he stands to rebuke any that will attempt it, Zech. iii. 1, 2. No service of theirs rejected in heaven, he offers them with his own hand; and lest sins and failings should appear, he interposes his merit, righteousness, satisfaction; this is that incense mentioned, Rev. viii. 3, which turns all their imperfect offerings into the smell of a sweet odour. Oh what comfort is here for those that are come! What encouragement for those that are not come to resolve upon it! Nay, more,

His present administrations. Not only all he did on earth before his ascension, and all he does in heaven since he left the earth, but all he does on earth when he is in heaven; all his dispensations are with respect of them, and for singular advantage to them, though they take no notice of it, though it seem so much of another tendency as they can scarce believe it, Rom. viii. 28. 'All things,' none excepted; 'called,' those that answer his call, come when he calls. Nay, further, not only all that he did on earth, all that he does in heaven and earth, but

All that he suffered shall be yours, as much for your advantage as if you had suffered them in person. Did he endure poverty? It was that you might have the riches of glory, 2 Cor. viii. 9. Did he live in the form of a servant? It was that you might obtain the adoption of sons. Was he forsaken? It was that you might be eternally owned. Was he slandered and condemned? It was that you might be absolved and justified before God's tribunal. Did he weep? It was that you might rejoice. Did sorrow oppress his heart? It was that everlasting joy might be upon your heads. Was his soul burdened with wrath? It was that you might be freed from that burden. Was he wounded? It was that your languishing souls might be healed. Was he made sin? It was for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God. Did he bear the curse? It was that you might inherit the blessing. Was he scourged? It was that you might be embraced in the arms of everlasting love. Was he crucified? It was that you might be crowned. Did he bleed and die? It was that you might live and reign for ever and ever.

Come to Christ, and you shall know this so assuredly as if an angel from heaven were sent to tell it to you. But if you will live in sin, if all this move you not to part with all to come to Christ, you shall have neither share nor lot in anything that pertains to Christ; if, when Christ has made known to you these great things of the gospel, and when he has offered you his unsearchable riches, you continue obstinate in your evil ways, and confident of your good estate, while strangers and enemies to him in your minds through evil works, why, then, these glorious discoveries are as a vain thing to you, it is a sign the Father has not given you to Christ, for 'all that the Father hath given him will come to him;' it is a sign the offers of sin are more prevalent with you than the offers of Christ, and that 'the god of this world hath blinded your minds,' &c., 2 Cor. iv. 4; but if hereby you resolve to deny yourselves, renounce your sins and come to Christ, then all these glorious riches of Christ shall be your portion. Conclude with Deut. xxx. 19, here is set before you a curse and a blessing, sin and Christ; set before you life and death, sin with death, if ye continue in sin, ye shall die; Christ and life, if ye come to Christ, ye shall live. Oh then, come to Christ, and ye shall have life! choose him, and your souls shall live!

8. The equity of it. If there were neither necessity nor advantage, yet

since it is most equal to do this which Christ requires of you, even this should be a prevailing motive. The equity appears in these particulars,

(1.) Ye lose nothing by coming to Christ. If ye were invited to your loss you might then refuse, there would be some excuse to make your delays and refusals more plausible, but ye can be no losers; gain you may much, infinitely much, but ye can lose nothing; all you get by this journey will be clear gains. But shall we not lose our sins? Must we not part with our dear, gainful, delightful lusts? True, you must part with these; but if you did duly apprehend what sin is, and believe what the Lord in Scripture speaks of, you would never count it a loss to part with any sin whatsoever. Sin is your misery, the spring of all that you count miserable; Satan and the world could never injure you were it not for and by sin, it is sin that is the foundation and complement of your misery. Now, is it any loss to part with misery? Does Christ offer you loss when he would have you come to him upon condition you will part with your misery?

Sin is your fetters, your dungeon; hence the state of sin is set forth in Scripture as a state of darkness and bondage, these are the chains wherein Satan keeps you captive. Now, will a poor captive think he loses anything by leaving his prison and shaking off his fetters? No more can you lose by parting with sin to come to Christ.

Sin is your sickness, your soul's consumption: hence the prophet expresses the sinfulness of Judah in these terms, Isa. i. 5, 'The whole head is sick;' hence freedom from sin is promised under the notion of healing, Hosea xiv. 4, implying sin is the soul's disease. Now, is it any loss to part with a disease? You lose no more by parting with sin than a languishing consumed man loses by parting with his sickness; and will you refuse to come to Christ rather than part with this?

Sin is the wound, the plague of your souls. The more sins the more plague-sores; for sin is that which is called 'the plague of the heart,' 1 Kings viii. 86. By reason of this, the prophet says, there was no soundness in his people, nothing but wounds, &c., Isa. i. 6. Now, is it any loss to part with the plague? is it any loss to be cured of a mortal wound? This is all that Christ would have you lose, and will you refuse him rather than part with it?

Sin is your ugliness, your deformity, that which makes your souls loathsome, Prov. xiii. 5. Why loathsome, but because wicked? Every creature is lovely in God's eye, but this whom sin has polluted and putrified; it is sin that is your loathsomeness. Now would any woman that stands upon her preferment think it a loss to part with a loathsome deformity? This is your case: Christ would have you come, that he may espouse you; he requires no other terms than that you would be willing to part with your deformity; and will you lose Christ, rather than part with your loathsomeness?

Sin is your poison; so it is called, Deut. xxxii. 88; James iii. 8, 'Full of deadly poison;' what is that but full of sin? If the tongue, much more the heart, for that is the spring of sin; being full of sin, it is full of deadly poison. This then is your condition: there is a deadly poison working in your bowels, working in your heart; it will certainly be your death if you do not void it; and this is all you lose by coming to Christ, only part with your poison, be willing to vomit up that which will otherwise ruin you. And will you love your poison more than Christ?

Sin is your frenzy and madness. The prodigal, till he was coming to his father, came not to himself. This is all Christ would have you part

with. Will any but a madman be unwilling to be rid of his madness ? It may be you slight these things now, and have quite other apprehensions of sin ; but you will find it no better, you will apprehend it to be much worse than I have represented it ; much worse, either here, or when it will be too late, if you persist. I beseech you, consider the day is coming, when you must stand before Christ's tribunal, to give an account of this very thing, why you would not part with sin, why you would not come to Christ. Will you then say, you thought better of sin than now you find it ? But Christ will tell you, you heard what sin was from his mouth, from his messengers ; you heard it was your sickness, your plague, your poison, your deformity, and yet you would lose me rather than part with it, you would prefer your plague and poison before me, offering you life and glory. Oh how glorious will the justice of Christ be in sending such sinners to hell, who will not have one word to plead more for themselves why they should not perish ! How justly may he say to them, 'Depart from me,' who will not hear for all he can do or say, who will not here come to him, who will not part with the plague to come to him, who prefer their fetters and frenzy, their diseases and deformity, before Christ !

If Christ required you to cut off your members, there might be some plea, but it is only to part with your wounds ; if he should bid you pluck out your hearts, &c., but he would only have you part with the plague of your hearts ; if he should bid you abstain from meat for ever, then you might have something to plead ; nay, but he would only have you abstain from poison : and then judge you, are not Christ's ways equal ? Does he require you to come upon any unreasonable terms ? Oh no. Even those that must perish for their refusals, as all must that will persist refusing, will be forced to confess that it was the most equal thing in the world that Christ desired, when he bade them leave their sins to come to him.

(2.) He waits till you come. The great God stoops so low as to wait upon sinners, Isa. xxx. 18 ; he waits as one ardently desiring the motion, the return of sinners to himself, and shall he wait in vain ? He stands willing to entertain you. If there was any fear not to be admitted, there might be some plea for not coming ; but he never rejects a returning sinner, he never did, he never will withdraw from them, or shut them out from himself, provided they come when he invites them. There is a time, indeed, when sinners shall not be admitted, but that is hereafter ; when sinners have worn out his patience, and rejected his offers and entreaties, till there be no remedy ; but 'now is the accepted time,' the time when you may be accepted : 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice,' and come to him, you shall undoubtedly enter into his rest. He that now resolves to come needs not doubt of entertainment, John vi. 37 ; no matter what you have been, or what you are, how sinful, how unworthy, resolve but to come, this shall not hinder ; he never did, he never will, cast out a returning sinner ; he will not do it in anywise, upon any terms and considerations whatsoever : If you come when he calls, he will in nowise cast you out.

And so he waits for your coming, waits industriously, waits patiently. He waits so as he uses all means to draw you to him. He speaks to you by his providence, he woos you by his word, he sends his messengers to invite, to entreat, to beseech you to come, he puts words in their mouths by which he would have them woo you, he suggests arguments to their minds by which he would have them persuade you, he assists them by his Spirit to manage these persuasions, to enforce these arguments, so as they may prevail, or leave you inexcusable ; he sends these to you, when he

neglects others; he sends them early and late, he sends them, and sends by them to you, rising up betimes, because he has compassion on you, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15; he bears with the disrespects you put upon his messengers, though they reflect upon himself; and though you refuse to hear, and be weary of hearing, yet is not the Lord weary of waiting, not weary of entreating; and when others or yourselves would put away the word, and break off this treaty for reconciliation, yet the Lord mangres all provocations, continues it. Oh the wonderful indulgence of Christ!

Nay, he comes himself, he leaves not himself without witness as to the vouchsafement of his presence; your consciences can tell, you are convinced, though not persuaded; he 'stands at the door and knocks;' he stretches out his hands to you, you see him held forth by the gospel in a posture ready to receive you, and when you take no notice, he calls, he lifts up his voice and cries to you; he calls to you over and over, Come, come, come unto me, Mat. xi., &c.; and thus he waits with patience, he waits whole days, all the day long; he stands day and night till his head be wet with the dew; nay, he waits whole years, 'These three years have I come, expecting fruit,' &c., 'Forty years long have I been grieved with this generation,' &c.; and when all this will not do, he breaks forth into sad complaints, and laments their wretched disregard of himself, and woeful cruelty to their own souls: 'Oh that thou hadst known,' &c., 'O Jerusalem,' Ps. lxxxi. 13; 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me!'

But then, if any sinner listen unto him, and be willing to come, why this is his joy, his delight; in this Christ rejoices, and heaven rejoices with him, Luke xv. 7-10: Christ does, as it were, say to the angels, as he to his friends and neighbours, ver. 6, 'Rejoice with me;' this poor sinner was given me by the Father, he was mine by eternal purpose, but he had lost both himself and me, and now, after much seeking, I have found him, he is returning to me: 'Rejoice with me,' &c.

Oh if you will come to Christ, you will make Christ glad, you will make heaven rejoice! All this is clearly exemplified in the next parable of the prodigal: 'When the prodigal was yet a great way off, his father met him.' The son *comes* but towards his father, but the father *runs* towards an unworthy child; the son is ashamed of himself, his father had compassion on him; he stands accusing himself, his father falls on his neck and kisses him; he confesses his offence, his father never once mentions it; he expects to fare like a servant, but is entertained as the most beloved son; the father provides him a robe, a ring, a feast, and entertains him with great joy: 'For this my son,' says he, ver. 24, 'was lost, and is found,' &c. See here, poor sinners, how you shall be entertained if you will return to Christ, even as the father entertained his prodigal son; he will run and meet you, he will have compassion on you, he will never upbraid you, he will fall, as it were, upon your neck and embrace you; he will think nothing too good, too fine, too costly for you; he will rejoice, and call others to rejoice with him for you. The Lord thinks it meet to rejoice and be glad: ver. 32, 'This my son was dead, but he is come to me for life: he was lost, but I have found him.' Oh how equal, how more than equal, is it to come to Christ, since he is so ready to meet you, since he will so joyfully entertain you.

4. The danger. And this is exceeding great, whether you consider the sin or the punishment; not to come to Christ is a most grievous sin, and will be most grievously punished; a heinous sin. For not to come

Is murder; and which is more, soul-murder; and which is more, wilful

murder of your souls. You know the cry of murder is louder than the cry of other sins, it is a loud crying sin ; but soul-murder is more grievous, and cries louder for vengeance than that of the body, inasmuch as the soul is more precious and permanent than the body ; but wilful murder is this sin in its highest exaltation of guilt and heinousness. Now you wilfully murder your souls if you will not come to Christ ; for why does he invite you ? he bids you come for life. Now if you will not come, you will not have life, you are resolved to die in your sins ; you wilfully put away the life of your souls, and so murder them.

Nor does it hinder that sinners are already dead in a spiritual sense : for to prevent life, is murder in the sight of God, as well as to take away life ; those that wilfully procure abortions are as guilty of murder as those that cut the throats of their children. And this is the case, by refusing to come to Christ, you prevent the life of your souls ; and this is as much murder as if one should deprive his soul of spiritual life after she is quickened. Here is an Italian cruelty indeed, to murder a soul, yea, and wilfully too. What means has Christ used to make you willing to come for life, and ye would not ! what arguments have his messengers used to persuade you to come for life, and ye will not ! what remains then, but if you perish, the blood of your souls will be upon your own heads ? None else can be accused, of none else can your blood be required, Ezek. xxxiii. 8, 9 ; if you come to Christ, you may have life, but you will not ; you may escape death, but you will not. If so, are you not then the death of your own souls ? do you not wilfully murder them ? Oh tremble at the apprehension of such a crime ! and you that are afraid to shed the blood of others, imbrue not your hands in the blood of your own souls ; as you would avoid the guilt of self, of soul murder, come to Christ, that you may have life.

Dangerous, in respect of the severity of Christ's proceedings against this sin.

(1.) If you will not come to Christ, he will come against you, either in a severer way to reclaim you, or utterly to destroy you. This he threatens to Ephesus in case she returned not from a partial backsliding, Rev. ii. 5 ; if you will not come when Christ calls, he will make you smart for it ; so he warns Laodicea, Rev. iii. 19 ; if he love you, he will whip you to himself rather than quite lose you ; if the word prevail not, Christ will take the rod ; if you will not hear, he will make you feel what it is to neglect him. Wise parents that are afflicted with rebellious children, if no other means will reclaim them, will rather send them to the house of correction than suffer them to come to the gallows ; be sure of it, if the word move you not, Christ will sharply correct you, rather than let you perish, except you be castaways.

Manasseh was an obstinate sinner, he little regarded what the Lord spoke to him by his messengers, while he was in prosperity ; but the Lord took another course with him, he gave him into the hands of the Assyrians, who bound him with fetters, and led him captive, and then he bethought himself of returning to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxiii.

The prodigal was resolute in his evil ways till he was almost starved, but want brought him first to himself, and then to his father. The Lord can take a course to starve you out of all the strongholds of sin, that hold out against Christ, and detain you from him ; and if he take any pleasure in you, this course he will take, if the word prevail not. When Joab would not come to Absalom, he fired his corn-field, and that brought him. Look to it, if the Father hath given you unto Christ, he will not lose you ; if fair



means will not prevail, he will take another course ; if your hearts be so much on any enjoyment, as it hinders you from Christ, he will find a way to take it from you ; therefore if you would enjoy what he has vouchsafed you, come to Christ, that is the way to secure it ; better you should not have anything left you in the world, than that anything in the world should keep you from Christ. As Christ has cords of love, so he has a rod of iron ; if you break his cords, he will take his rod ; such a rod, as if mercy manage it, it will bruise you, but if justice wield it, it will dash you in pieces ; though you belong to him, he may bruise you. David's fall cost him broken bones ; but if you are not his, the weight of it will grind you to powder ; had you not better come to Christ at a word, than force him to take his rod, put him upon a severer course ?

(2.) If you will not come to him, he will depart from you, and you know not how soon. Christ may wait long, but he will not wait ever ; his patience will have a period, and thou knowest not how suddenly as to thy self. If thou now refuse, may be Christ will depart this instant ; and when he is once gone, then woe to thee for ever, Hos. ix. 12. Thou mayest hear his word, but it shall never profit thee ; though it be spoke to thy ear, he will never speak to thy heart ; then though thou call, yet will he not answer thee ; though thou cry unto him, yet he will not regard thee, no more than thou wouldst formerly regard him ; nay, he will ' laugh at thy destruction, and mock when thy fear cometh,' Prov. i. This will your sad estate be when Christ is gone, and it is your refusals that provoke him to depart. When Jerusalem would not come to him, would not be gathered by him, what follows ? Mat. xxiii. 37, immediately to their *would not* he returns, ' Behold your house is left unto you desolate,' ver. 38. Why desolate ? Not only because of those desolating judgments that were to follow, but because of Christ's departure, which was their forerunner ; so he adds, ver. 39, ' Desolate, because ye shall not see me there.' Ay, that place is desolate where Christ walks not, where he is not seen and enjoyed, whatever other company frequents it. And how many places that enjoy the gospel are left desolate in this respect ? Their refusals have occasioned Christ's departure. The gospel does not convince, convert, persuade, it prevails not. Why ? The people have sinned away Christ's presence. And then, though the gospel be sent, yet it is sent in wrath ; for such a time we read of, when it is sent, not to heal and convert, but to harden and make blind, Hosea vi. 9, 10. This is the issue of refusing to come when Christ calls, and oh woeful is their condition to whom the only ordinary means of life is turned into the savour of death.

These are the sad effects of Christ's departure, and it will not be long ere he depart if ye still refuse him ; though he be long-suffering, he is not ever-suffering. The spouse herself delayed but a little to admit Christ, and presently he was gone, Cant. v. 2, 3, 6. Make haste then before it be too late ; now you enjoy the light, come to Christ while you see the way, walk in the light while ye have the light ; when Christ is gone, darkness comes, and he that walks in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. Now Christ stands and knocks, make haste and open to him ; ere long he will not stand, he will not knock any more ; now he seeks to you, if you will come, he will be found of you ; if you put him off, you may seek him, but never find him more : ' Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation ;' but ere long this time, this day will be no more ; now he invites, entreats, beseeches you to come. Oh that you would answer with the church, ' Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God !'

Now he speaks, 'To-day, then, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, lest he swear in his wrath you shall never enter into his rest.'

(3.) If you will not come to Christ now, you shall not come to him hereafter. This was the sad issue of the Jews' refusal, John vii. 33, 34. Thus will it fare with all refusers; Christ will say to them, I sought you, and you would not be found of me, therefore now, though you seek me, you shall not find me; I came to you in my word and ordinances, by my messengers, by my Spirit, but you would not entertain me; sin and the world was more welcome than myself, therefore I will be gone, I will leave you; and whither I go, you shall not, you cannot come: I go to my Father, my abode will be henceforth in heaven, but you are joined to the world and your lusts; enjoy what you have chosen, me ye shall not enjoy, where I am, ye shall not come. Oh sad doom! Whither will wretched sinners go, since they must not come where Christ is! Now ye please yourselves with sin and outward enjoyments, but sin shall then be your torment, and all your delightful enjoyments shall then be consumed before your eyes; no joys, no hopes of any then, but in Christ (that which you will not believe now, your eyes shall then see); but when these are gone, Christ will be gone too, and whither he goes, ye shall not come. O forlorn sinner, 'thine own wickedness then shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: then thou shalt know and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,' Jer. ii. 19. Forsaken of all comforts in the world, and forsaken of Christ too! Oh woeful condition! This is it that your refusals lead to. If ye will not come to him, he will be gone; and whither he goes ye shall not come; if ye will not have Christ now, ye shall not have heaven then; if you say, We will not have this man (so holy, so strict, so severe against sin, so jealous of our compliance with the world) to rule over you now, why, you shall not rule, you shall not reign with him then. His kingdom will not be open for all comers, only for those that come to him here. Those that will not come now, must then go. Go whither? Why, go from Christ. Oh dreadful word! Go from Christ! There is hell in this word; yea, and then obstinate sinners will find it so. Christ now says, 'Come,' that is the voice of his love, of his gospel; ay, but if ye now refuse, Christ will change his note, ye shall hear other words from him; he that now says 'Come,' will then say, 'Go,' get ye hence, 'Depart from me, ye cursed;' you would none of me, my ways were too straight, too holy, too solitary; my yoke was uneasy, my burden too heavy in your account; well, now I have nothing to do with you, depart from me into everlasting burnings; get ye hence from me to the devil and his angels; to him ye came, to him ye shall go; from me ye departed, and now ye shall depart from me for ever; since you would not believe, now you shall feel what it is to prefer sin and the world before me. Go to the gods that ye have served, feed on the fruit of those lusts that ye have loved; get ye to him whose suggestions you would rather obey than my invitations, this is the doom of all that will not come, Mat. xxv. 41.

(4.) If ye will not come to Christ, ye shall not have life. This is the sense of the words, no life but in Christ, no partaking of life but by coming to Christ; if ye will not come to him for life, ye shall die in your sins, die spiritually, die eternally. No life at all, nothing but death, without Christ, without coming to Christ; if you will not come to Christ, why then bid adieu to Christ and life together, for they can never be parted; if ye will not come, ye shall die; if ye will come, ye shall live.

*Obs.* Those that come to Christ shall have life. It is clearly implied, the scripture is in nothing more express than this, 1 John v. 12, as Christ professes that he is life in himself, John xiv. 16, so is he life to his people, to those that come to him, Col. iii. 4. But how come they to have life by Christ, but by believing? John xi. 25, and believing is coming, John vi. 35.

But what life is this?

All that the Scripture compriseth in this word life, all that is opposite to that death which Adam brought into the world, Rom. v. For as the first Adam was the original of death in its full extent, so is Christ, the second Adam, of life in its utmost latitude; of life spiritual, eternal, yea, and of natural too; if not in its being, yet in its well-being. For though the two former be principally intended, yet must not the other be excluded, since it is a safe and received rule to understand Scripture in the largest sense, where there is no reason to restrain it. But the Jews were alive naturally when Christ thus spoke to them; what need was there to come for that which they had already? may some say. It is true, they had natural life in its being, but not in its well-being; they, and all, must come to Christ for that, or want it. Natural life without Christ is as good as no life; *non est vita vivere, sed valere*; it is the welfare of life that is life indeed, and this men get by coming to Christ, another kind of life natural than natural men partake of, in respect of the tenure, blessing, comfort, usefulness, tendency of this life, without which better not live than have this natural life.

1. Those that come to Christ shall have another kind of temporal life.

(1.) In respect of its *tenure*. Until sinners come to Christ, they hold their life only upon common providence, that is their title; but believers they hold their lives by virtue of the covenant of grace, and that is the most sweet and blessed tenure in the world, 1 Tim. iv. 8. They have the promise of life, the Lord gives them a title by covenant; now covenant-mercies are the chief, if not the only mercies. Sinners out of Christ live as a condemned malefactor under a reprieve; sentence of death is passed, only the judge's patience suspends the execution. Such is the condition of a sinner's life; he is only suffered to live, he owes his life to the Lord's patience, he lives but by permission; ay, but he that is in Christ has his life by gift, a gift of love and free grace, not common patience, but special mercy gives him life, 1 Cor. iii. 22, and life among the rest. Until Christ be yours, even this temporal life is not yours upon covenant terms, not yours by virtue of special mercy and distinguishing love. Before your lives can thus be yours, Christ must be yours, you must come to him, or else want life while ye have it, want it upon those blessed and gracious terms.

(2.) In respect of the *blessing* of life. Life is not a blessing special but by Christ. Sinners out of Christ, as they are cursed when they die, so, while they live, the curse cleaves to their life, as the leprosy to Gehazi. It leaves not their natural life till they leave their natural condition, and come to Christ. Your temporal life is an accursed life till ye come to Christ; so it is from the womb to the grave, Deut. xxviii. 18. As soon as life is received, the curse is conceived, and expires not till the sinner comes to Christ, who became a curse, that those who come to him might be delivered from it. Life is a blessing in itself, but sin turns this blessing into a curse; and till sin be taken away, the curse continues, and guilt is not removed till the soul move to Christ; then, and not till then, does life become a blessing, when the sinner comes to Christ.

(8.) In respect of the *comfort* of life. Natural life can never be truly comfortable while the sinner lives out of Christ. He has the possession of life, but not the comfort of life, till Christ make it comfortable: Ps. lxxxvii. 7, 'All my springs are in thee.' Christ is the only spring of comfort in the world. Sin, at its first entrance into the world, made all other springs dry, and ever since, all the earth, and every part of it where Christ is not enjoyed, is a dry and thirsty wilderness, where there is no water, no drop of comfort. It is true sinners think their lives comfortable, but their comforts are but fancies, at least unhallowed comforts, such as will be bitterness in the end. If their coming to Christ prevent not, even their chiefest delights will end in the greatest bitterness. They will see (what now they are far from believing) that their mirth is but like the mirth of madmen. If they knew their condition, their joys would be turned into sorrow and astonishment. The Lord is in Christ the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. As all comforts are in him, so not a drop of comfort comes from him but through Christ; and none is conveyed through Christ to any but such as come to him. The fountain is sealed to all other sinners, 2 Cor. i. 8; there is not the least ground of comfort in your lives while ye live without Christ. The comfort of life, which is indeed the life of our lives, is only from Christ, only for those that come to him.

(4.) In respect of the *usefulness* of life. Of what else\* is the life of a sinner living without Christ? Serviceabler, indeed, it is to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, serviceabler it is to Satan to increase his subjects, and strengthen his kingdom; but how is it serviceable to God? how useful for promoting those great ends for which it is vouchsafed? In these respects it is of no use, renders the sinner a vessel in which the Lord takes no pleasure, as being unfit for his master's use. Indeed the Lord serves himself of sinners, and overrules their lives, so as to force honour to himself out of them, but otherwise of their own accord they are unserviceable and useless.

A sinner's life without Christ is a talent hid in a napkin; the Lord of it gets no advantage by it; it serves to bring the sinner under the doom of an unprofitable servant. Of what other use is it? Your lives without Christ are as lamps without oil; if ye make not haste to Christ to light them, you will fare as the foolish virgins; the bridegroom may pass by, and shut you out of the marriage-chamber, shut you out of heaven for ever.

The usefulness of your lives depend upon your coming to Christ; then only will they become serviceable, 'vessels unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work,' 2 Tim. ii. 21. What Paul says of Onesimus, Philem. 11,—'Which in time past' (viz., before he came to Christ) 'was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me,'—may be said of the life of every sinner before he comes to Christ. He is unprofitable to Christ, to his church, to his family, to his relations; not spiritually useful to any, no, nor to himself; a burden of the earth, one that cumpers the ground; barren himself, and keeps others barren; is fruitful in no respect, except in the unfruitful works of darkness; but when he comes to Christ, then serviceable to the Lord, to his people, &c. Oh, what is an useless life worth! Why, it is not worth the having, the desiring. If you would have your lives worth either, come to Christ; that is the way to make them useful; the usefulness of them depends on this.

Qu. 'use'?—Ed.

(5.) In respect of the *tendency* of life. Natural life in a sinner without Christ tends to death; it is always as Jordan, running towards the Dead Sea. The tendency of it is to lock up the sinner faster in the grave of spiritual death, to roll more stones to the mouth of that woeful sepulchre, that he may be more sure of eternal death. The tendency of this life is deadly. Ay, but when he comes to Christ, his life tends to spiritual life and peace, to glory and happiness, to the glorifying of God, and being glorified with him. Christ turns the current.

Thus you see that natural life, in all respects wherein it is truly desirable, depends upon coming to Christ. Till then, this life is little better than death; and the sinner, while he lives without Christ, is, as the apostle speaks of our living in pleasure, 1 Tim. v. 6, 'dead while he lives.' And so was the prodigal, till he came to his father; he was frolic, merry, active, lively enough in his own ways; but when he was not himself, his father, who could better judge of his state, took him for a dead, a lost man: 'This my son,' says he, 'was dead,' &c. And herein, as otherwise, he was an emblem of a sinner out of Christ; how merry, jovial, lively soever he be in the ways of sin, he is as a dead man in the Lord's account. Natural life does then become truly life when a sinner comes to Christ, and those that come shall find it so in the premised respects.

Thus in these respects temporal life is from Christ. Now,

2. Spiritual life is from him in all respects. Those that come to him, and only those, shall have spiritual life from him, both a life of righteousness and holiness.

(1.) A life of *righteousness*. That is it which the apostle calls, Rom. v. 18, 'Justification of life comes upon all men.' Not all and every man, but all that come to him, all that are his. As condemnation came upon all that were Adam's, death came by Adam's sin, justification to life by Christ's righteousness; that to all that were in Adam, *this* to all that are in Christ, all men being in Adam, and death threatened in case he should sin; 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' Gen. ii. 17. He sinning, the sentence of death passed upon him, and all his posterity in him; so that all men by nature are dead men in law, they are condemned already, John iii. 18. Now the sentence of God's condemning man to death being most just and righteous, it is irrevocable, and so death unavoidable. Christ then, seeing God's justice could not be salved nor satisfied without death, was willing to suffer the death threatened, and this he suffered for those, and only those, that come to him. Wherefore a sinner coming to Christ, when he finds in the law the sentence of death awarded against him, it is true, may he say, the sentence is most righteous; death is due to my sin, but Christ has suffered that death; he died in my stead, and God looked upon him dying for my sin as though I myself had died for it; and death being suffered, the law is satisfied, and I am absolved; I am in Christ, come to him, and there is no condemnation to such, Rom. viii. The Lord himself has justified me, as having suffered in Christ what justice required, and therefore now nothing can be laid to my charge, according to ver. 33, 34. Can any charge me that by law I am condemned to death? No, 'it is God that justifies me.' He absolves me, 'who is he then that condemneth?' But how can this stand with the truth and justice of God, who has peremptorily passed the sentence of death against thee, and said, 'In the day thou sinnest thou shalt surely die'? Why, very well, for Christ has died in my stead; so he adds, 'It is Christ that died.' Thus by Christ's sufferings and righteousness comes the justifica-

tion of life to those who come to Christ. Hence the favour of God, Ps. xxx. 5, lxiii. 8.

(2.) A life of holiness. This is life in Scripture phrase. Hence, when a sinner is translated out of the state of nature into the state of grace, he is said to pass from death to life, 1 John iii. When he first receives the principles of holiness, he is said to be born again, John iii., and the progress in holiness is called a new life: Rom. vi. 4, 'newness of life,' after the Hebrew phrase, who put the abstract for the concrete, newness for new, &c. This life is from Christ, and those that come to him have it from him in these respects:

[1.] Principles of this life. The seeds, the habit of grace, every perfect gift, comes from above, as all light comes from the sun; but how do these gifts come from him? By, or in whom are they conveyed? The apostle tells us, Eph. i., in Christ. When the soul, coming to Christ, has union with him, it is united to the fountain of life. Christ is that to the soul which the soul is to the body; accordingly it is expressed, Gal. ii. 20, 'Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Even as we may say, the body of a man lives, yet not the body, but the soul lives in it, by virtue of its union with the soul; so a believer lives, yet not he, but Christ lives in him; and the life that he lives is by virtue of his union with Christ, by faith uniting him with the Son of God. No life of grace, no seeds, no principles of it, without coming to Christ, without union with him; those that come to him shall be united with him, shall be replenished with these principles.

[2.] The increase of this life. This is from Christ, John x. 10. Justification and glory are not capable of addition or diminution, cannot be said to decay or abound; it must be meant of the life of holiness. As Christ lays the foundation, so he carries on the building; both the being and increase is from him; even as animal spirits (upon which the life, and motion, and sense, the vital acts of the body, depend) are conveyed in abundance by the several parts through the whole body, from the head, so from the head Christ (it is the apostle's similitude, which he uses more than once, Eph. iv. 15, 16). All that tends to the growth of Christ's body is conveyed from the head to the several parts and members, compacted together for the better conveyance of this lively influence to the whole. And this is by and 'according to the effectual working of Christ in every part,' according to its capacity, and hence arises the increase thereof, which he expresses by the same resemblance, Col. ii. 19. From Christ the head, all his members, mutually united amongst themselves, and unto him, as it were by joints and ligaments, have nourishment ministered, so as they increase with the increase of God, *i. e.*, with an exceeding great increase; according to the property of the Hebrew tongue, much followed in the New Testament, who, when they would express the exceeding greatness of a thing, they add the name of God unto it: Ps. lxxx. 11, goodly

cedars, אֲרָזֵי אֱלֹהִים, the cedars of God; so Ps. xxxvi. 7. Righteousness, as the great mountains, כְּהַרְרֵי אֱלֹהִים; so Cant. viii. 6. So here, the spiritual nourishment which he conveys to those who come to him, are one with him, tends to make their increase, their growth in grace, an exceeding great increase; to him we must go if we would grow in grace, if we would have this life in more abundance. If we would not be guilty of the backslidings, barrenness, non-proficiency, for which the Lord has a controversy with the professors of our times, we must come to Christ for it; it is he

that causeth all grace to abound, it is of his fulness that his people receive grace for grace.

[3.] The acts of this life. The exercise of holiness, as the habit is from him, so is the act; it is he that worketh in us both to will and to do; both the inward motion, to will, and the outward expression, to do, is from him. If a man have never so much strength, yet if he sleep, he acts not, till he be stirred up; if a man have never so much grace, if he be not acted, excited by Christ, if he have not a special assistance from Christ's Spirit, he cannot, he will not exercise it. We see many sanctified, as having the principles of holiness implanted in them, yet few acts, little exercise of it in their conversation; why? They neglect Christ, rest on what is received, depend not on him for special assistance to act them, and draw grace into exercise. Independency in acting is God's prerogative: Philip. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' He wanted not habitual, but actual strength, without which we can do nothing, with which a weaker Christian can outdo a stronger: 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.' What sufficiency was wanting? Why, Christ's special help, to move, act, determine holy principles; without which, not sufficient for a good thought; if we would have the lively, vigorous actings of grace, we must come to Christ; if we would not have the principles of life received to lie unactive in the soul, as though they were dead, we must come to Christ for this life; he has it for those who come.

[4.] The continuance of this life. Though ye have received it, and that in abundance, and exercise it accordingly, yet without Christ, grace itself would die and expire; it is he that keepeth our soul in life, Ps. lxxvi. 9. The continuance of this life depends upon Christ's intercession and acting for us; he tells Peter, Luke xxii. 32, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' And every one that comes to him is included in this prayer: John xvii. 15, 'I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but deliver them from the evil;' from those evils that are destructive to life, and threaten the death of the soul. In order hereto, he strengthens them to resist those assaults, those blows, which would else prove mortal; he enables them to oppose corruption within, and Satan and the world without, so that they are in all these 'more than conquerors.' But how? 'Through him that has loved us,' Rom. viii. 37. He keeps them in his hand, else they might be plucked from him, life itself plucked from them, John x. 26. Spiritual life in all these respects is from Christ, and those that come to him may have it of him.

8. Eternal life is from Christ. Those that come to him shall have eternal life, in respect of title, hopes, and earnest here, and possession hereafter.

(1.) *Title* to eternal life. Adam in his integrity, and we in him, had a right to eternal life, the promise of God was our patent, but sinning, and failing in the condition, he, and we in him, utterly lost all title to eternal life; nor can any son of Adam, out of Christ, lay any claim to it. But the Lord Jesus Christ has bought a new title for those that come to him. It cost him dear indeed, the price was his blood, but all that come to him shall have it freely; he bought it for this end, and therefore heaven is called a purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. The patent is renewed, another title is acquired. But for whom? Those only that come to him; none else have right to it: Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.' What commandments

are those upon which this right is suspended? Why, the first and chief commandment is, that we come to him, and if there be any other, it depends upon this; when this is done, Christ gives a sinner right to the tree of life.

(2.) *Hope of eternal life.* A lively hope, an assuring hope, a well-grounded hope, such a hope as makes it so sure as though we were in possession. Hence believers are said to be already saved, Eph. ii. 8, Titus iii. 4. But salvation is yet to come; how are we then said to be already saved? The apostle tells us: Rom. viii. 24, 'By hope.' But whence comes this hope? See 1 Tim. i. 1, Col. i. 27. Christ is the foundation of this hope, and to them only who come to him, 1 Peter ii. 4, 6. Those alone shall not be confounded. Those who hope for heaven, and yet are so much in love with sin as they will not come to Christ, and yet will hope for heaven, shall find their hopes delusions, and thereupon, as men who beyond all expectation meet with great disappointments, shall be confounded, their hopes shall make them ashamed. That hope which makes not ashamed, is the hope of those who have fled to Christ for refuge, to lay hold on him, the hope set before them, Heb. vi. 18, 19. This is the anchor of the returning soul; it will secure him in all storms, for it is both sure and steadfast, it is firmly and deeply fixed, and that in a sound bottom too: it entereth into that within the veil, the bottom where it is fixed is heaven, figured by the holy of holies, which was separated from the body of the temple by the great curtain or veil. He anchors in heaven who comes to Christ, who is entered there as his forerunner; he may safely ride out all storms, and is sure to arrive where his forerunner is landed, even in heaven.

(3.) *Earnest*, the first fruits of eternal life. Those that come to Christ shall have the beginnings of heaven here on earth, the first fruits of eternal life even in this life, some clusters of Canaan's grapes in the wilderness. Heaven is a place of joy, here they shall have joy unspeakable; a state of enjoyment, here they shall enjoy the presence and favour of God, fellowship with the Father, a state of glory; here some buddings of glory, that which makes them all glorious within, that for which they are said to be changed from glory to glory; a state of vision, here they shall see with open face the glory of God, though but in a glass, here they shall have a Pisgah sight of heaven at least.

(4.) *The possession of life eternal*, John vi. 40. They are so sure to possess it, as though they were in present possession. The expression is answerable, ver. 47, 1 John v. 10, 11.

*Use 1. Information.* Take notice of the misery of those who will not come to Christ. Those only that come to him have life; those, therefore, that come not to him are without life.

Without the blessings and comforts of natural life. The life you live without Christ is but such as the life of condemned malefactors; it is an uncomfortable, an unuseful, an accursed life, such as tends to death.

Without spiritual life in all respects. Justice has passed the sentence of death upon every such sinner, and it will never be repealed without satisfaction, which being of infinite value, none can tender but Christ, and he tenders it for none but those that come to him; till then, every such sinner is *בן מות*, a son of death: 1 Sam. xx. 31, rendered, 'He shall surely die;' or, as the Hellenists phrase it, John xvii. 12, *ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας*, a lost, a dead man; so he is in law already condemned, John iii. 19. Light Christ revealed in the gospel, and men love darkness, sin, the work of darkness, their natural sinful state, which is the state of darkness, and this



is condemnation. For this cause sinners are under the sentence of condemnation; and if God be just, as just he is essentially, no less than merciful, the sentence now passed will be executed on all that come not to Christ. This was the issue of the first sin: Rom. v. 18, 'Judgment came upon all;' so that every son of Adam, as soon as he lives, has judgment of condemnation to death, and so he continues a condemned person under the sentence of death, till he come to Christ, and then only is he absolved, Rom. viii. 1. Till then, as justice has sentenced him, so wrath attends him, he can have no sense of the favour of God, which is better than life, and so his condition is in this respect worse than death.

*Use 2. Examination.* By this ye may know whether ye be come to Christ or no. It concerns thee as much as thy life to know this, and yet few regard. Most take it for granted, when they have no ground for it, and therefore I have delivered many things formerly tending to conviction, that none may deceive themselves in a matter of such consequence; but because Satan and men's corrupt hearts are great enemies to this conviction, and it is the hardest thing we meet with to convince any of those who profess Christ that they are not come to Christ, let us make use of this truth for a further discovery. Would ye know whether ye be come to Christ or no? Why, by this you may know it: if ye be come to Christ ye have life, spiritual life. But how shall this be known? Why, by such resemblances betwixt natural and spiritual life as the Scripture holds forth; as where there is natural life there is breath, motion, sense, so where there is spiritual life there is spiritual breathings, motions, sensibleness.

1. Where there is life there is *breath*. Death is expressed by want of breath: Ps. civ. 29, 'Thou takest away their breath, they die;' and life is expressed by breath, as that which is inseparable from it, Ezek. xxxvii. 5, 6, 8, 10. Where there is spiritual life there is breathings after God; so Lam. iii. 56. The quickened soul breathes after God, the sense of his favour, communion with him; breathes after Christ's righteousness, the power of his death, the virtue of his resurrection; after growth in grace, and increase of holiness, victory over sin; after the enjoyment of God, Christ in his ordinances, nothing else will satisfy; so David, Ps. xlii. 1, 2, Ps. xxvii. 4, Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2. Think not we go too high in making David's example our rule; our gospel enjoyments require more, though few answer them. Where spiritual life is, there will be in some degree such breathings after Christ, such ardent desires, in some degree, more or less, according to the degrees of spiritual life: where no such breath, no life; that soul is not yet quickened, not yet come to Christ.

2. Where there is life there is *motion*. These are joined: 'In him we live and move;' they are inseparable both in grace and nature. When the soul is quickened, it moves towards God, the bent and inclination of the heart is after Christ, the affections are carried out to him, the conversation is an acting for him, it has another centre, and moves to other terms, from sin and the world, to Christ and heaven, Col. ii. 1. It moves spiritually. A natural man may move in God's ways, but he moves not spiritually; he may pray, read, hear, meditate, but not spiritually, not out of love to Christ, but out of custom, self-love, enforcements of conscience; not to honour Christ, not with any desires to enjoy him, but for by-ends, sinister respects; not affectionately, but in a heartless, careless, unaffected manner. If the work be done, he is satisfied, whatever the temper of his heart was in doing of it; whether God get glory by it, or he enjoy Christ in

it, he regards not ; so the duty be performed, it is enough. Such motion there may be without spiritual life, but it is spiritual motion which is the pulse by which ye may know this spiritual life. Where no heavenly inclinations, no holy tendencies towards Christ, with desires to enjoy and honour him, there is no spiritual life, such as are\* not yet come to Christ.

3. Where there is life there is *sense*.

The quickened soul *sees* a transcendent excellency in Christ, as to condemn, part with all for him ; sees a loathsome deformity in sin, sees a wonderful beauty in holiness, sees a woeful misery in a natural condition, and sees so as his soul is affected with it. Where these objects are not spiritually seen, affectionately discerned, there is no spiritual life.

*Hears*. The heart hears. That which comes but to the ears of others, when the gospel makes known the mysteries of regeneration, of Christ's righteousness imputed, of self-denial, of mortification, hears them as things which he finds, and has experience of in his own heart. When Christ commands to leave sin, to mortify lusts, be crucified to the world, decline his own carnal humours, interests, inclinations, he hears so as to obey, to resolve and endeavour it.

*Feels* a weight, a burden in sin, feels the wounds it has made in his soul ; he wonders he should be so much past feeling before, as not to be sensible of that load of sin which was pressing his soul down towards the pit. His conscience smarts by those sins which the world count not worthy the name of sin. Those that are past feeling are without life.

*Tastes* the sweetness of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. Christ is sweeter to him than any of the pleasures of sin. Formerly he heard of Christ's sweetness, and had such apprehensions of it as he had of the Israelites' manna, which he never saw nor tasted ; he thought of Christ's sweetness before, but now he has tasted his sweetness.

He tastes sweetness in the promises. They are sweeter to him than the honey and the honey-comb, he feeds on them as on manna, he lets them lie long on his soul, in his thoughts, as sweet things on our palates ; they are his dainties, his refreshment in the night-season, he has meat to feed on which the world knows not of.

He tastes sweetness in spiritual enjoyments. Enjoyment of Christ in his ordinances, this is to his soul as marrow and fatness ; as David promises himself, if he should again see the power and glory of God in the sanctuary : ' Then my soul shall,' &c., Ps. lxiii. 5. If you never tasted this, never had experience of so much pleasure in word, or prayer, or meditating on Christ or promises, but you have taken more delight in worldly pleasures ; never tasted such sweetness therein, but that you can live comfortably without them, if outward comforts be but continued, then it is evident you are yet without spiritual life, not yet come to Christ.

\* Qu. 'such are'?—Ed.