

# A SERMON preached immediately before the Communion,

On *Mat. 22. 4.* ——— *All things are ready : come to the marriage.*

**T**HERE are many great and glorious things spoken of the gospel; and our blessed Lord Jesus hath made use of many good similitudes, wonderfully apposite, to set it out : Sometimes 'tis called the *kingdom of heaven*, for reasons that we will not now insist upon ; sometimes 'tis called a *marriage*, as here and elsewhere. Some of those similitudes shew what great and singular satisfaction is to be had in it ; therefore it is compared to a *feast, supper, and dinner*. Some of them shew the way how we are made partakers of it ; so *opening* and *receiving* holds forth believing : And some of those similitudes hold forth both, as this of a *marriage*, which points at the strait union betwixt Christ and believers, and at the manner or way of our entring into this blessed union, on which follows communion.

We need not insist in opening the words, which are plain ; we shall only say these *two words*, to make way for *observations* : The *first* whereof shall be, to shew that the scope of the parable is not to hold forth peoples coming to the ordinances or the sacraments only or mainly ; but their coming to Christ Jesus himself, and to the far things in the ordinances. Many come to the ordinances, who come not to Christ and to the feast ; that which is called for here, is a real closing with Christ, and an accepting of him for our Husband, on his own terms. The *second* word is, to shew, that tho' the ordinances be neither the marriage nor the feast, yet it is by the ordinances that the marriage is furthered, and the feast prepared and made ready ; for faith takes Christ in the word, and strikes hands with him in the sacrament : When he saith in the word, *Be thou for me, and I will be for thee* ; Faith saith, Content Lord : And when he saith in the sacrament, *Take ;*  
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Faith faith, Welcome with all my heart ; he being there, as well as he is in the word.

These *two* things being premised, we shall, 1. At once and together propose some observations from the words. 2. We shall clear and confirm them. And then, 3. We shall insist in the application of all jointly. The *observations* are these, *First*, That in the gospel there is a clear and manifest making-up of a marriage betwixt Christ and souls. The preaching of the gospel is like a man's making of a marriage for his son. The *second* is, That this marriage is one of the most excellent marriages that ever was : Therefore it is called the marriage of the King's Son. The *third* is, That, before this marriage can be brought about and accomplished, there are many things to be made ready. The *fourth* is, That, where the gospel comes, all things are made ready for souls closing with Christ in this marriage. The *fifth* is, That the Master of the feast, the KING, God the Father, and the KING's Son, the Bridegroom, are not only content and willing, but very desirous to have sinners coming to the marriage : They would fain (to speak so with reverence) have poor souls espoused to Christ. The *sixth* is, That, when the Master sends out his servants in his name, their great work is to invite to the wedding, and to close the marriage. The *seventh* is, That, when people are invited to this marriage, it is their duty, and greatly of their concern, to come. The *eighth* is, That all they that come may expect a very hearty welcome : Therefore they are invited once and again. And if we compare this text with Luke 14. we will find there, that the Master orders his servants to compel them that are invited to come in.

All these *observations* are very obvious in the words ; and if the Lord would graciously please to help us to speak, and you to hear, as they are not impertinent to our present purpose, so they might be made very edifying, strengthening, refreshing and comfortable to us.

We shall, in the *second* place, a little more particularly clear and confirm every one of them. The *first* was, That there is a marriage betwixt Christ and souls, held forth and made offer of in this gospel. We take this for granted : For here is the King's Son, and some bidden to his marriage, and those that are bidden are not worthy : They are all

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professors and members of the visible Church; the scope of the parable being to shew, that the offer of this marriage was first made to the *Jews*, and again renewed to them, and then from them it came to the *Gentiles*. I shall in passing give you a little hint of the nature of this marriage, in these *four*: 1. There is by this gospel a real union made up betwixt Christ and the souls of believers: Which union is not with the ordinances, nor with sense, nor with the benefits which flow from Christ; but with Christ himself primarily and principally: And it is so near a tye, and very close, that it is preferred unto, and goeth beyond, the union that is betwixt the husband and wife, *Eph. 5. 30. We are* (says the apostle) *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*: Where, alluding to that union betwixt husband and wife, he not only makes the union real, but makes the one much straiter than the other. 2. The nature of this union is such, that it is mutual; the Bridegroom hath in a manner (to speak so, with reverence of his Majesty) no power over himself, when he is married unto the Bride; and the Bride hath no power over herself, but the Bridegroom: So that here there is a sort of mutual up-giving of the Bridegroom to the Bride, and of the Bride to the Bridegroom; according to those wonderfully condescending words, *Hosea 3. 3. Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee*. The Lord hath believers under a peculiar tye to him, and he hath tyed himself peculiarly to them, so that (if we may speak thus) neither of them is master of themselves: The Lord Jesus doth some way account himself not to be master of himself, he is so engaged to them to be theirs and for them, and cannot but be answerable to his engagement; and they are obliged to be no more masters of themselves, but to be absolutely and altogether at his disposing. 3. This union is made up by mutual consent of parties, and the consent must be willing. His consent comes in his word; he says from thence, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*: I come (as if he had said) in my gospel to woo; and, if any will consent to take me on the terms on which I offer myself, *I will be theirs*. The soul's consent is given by faith in his word, which

which is called, *John 1. 12. receiving of him*, and is relative to the offer: The offer is indeed backed and quickened by the Spirit, without which it would never be received; yet notwithstanding, that which our faith lays hold on, is not the Spirit, but the word quickened by the Spirit.

4. Consider here the effects that follow immediately and instantly on this marriage-union; Christ with all that is his becomes ours, and we with all that is ours become his: Our debt is imputed to him, he is liable to it, and must pay it, and provide for us, and be our Head and Husband; and his righteousness, the purchase of his death and sufferings, viz. justification, sanctification, his Spirit, grace and glory, and every good thing that he hath, become ours; and at length the Bride is taken into the King's ivory palaces.

The second observation was, *That this is a most honourable, noble and excellent marriage*; the like whereof never was, nor never shall be, from Adam to the end of the world: 'Tis with the *King's Son*, with the *Prince of the kings of the earth*, the *Heir of all things*, the *brightness of the Father's glory*, the *express image of his person*, who was before all things, and by whom all things consist. O! is there any match like this? Is there any so great and so noble as He? Is there any in this world whom ye can marry, that is so rich as He? They that marry him shall inherit all things, Rev. 21. 7. We may clear it a little further from five or six particulars in the text. 1. 'Tis an excellent and honourable marriage, in respect of the Bridegroom, who is (as hath been hinted) the *King's Son*; who hath not another natural son. He is the *only begotten of the Father*. There is not another Mediator: He is the *Father's Equal and Fellow*: So that, if (if we may put an *if* to it) the Father be great and glorious, so is he; for he is God, the same God equal with the Father in power and glory; the *wonderful Counsellor*, the *mighty God*, the *everlasting Father*, the *Prince of peace*. This marriage is excellent and honourable, in respect of the Bride's *Father-in-law* (so to speak) he is the King: God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost have all a hand in it; and the believer, married to Christ, is *daughter-in-law* to the great God, ingrafted some way into the same stock, allyed with the same family,

2 Cor. 6. 18. *I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.* 3. It is excellent and honourable, in respect of the preparation made for it. There was never such a wedding-feast; the dinner is prepared, the oxen and fatlings killed: But you will say, What is all that? Even Jesus Christ himself, he is that *Bread indeed, that Drink indeed, the Feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined*; the Bridegroom is (to say so) the chief Dish that the believer feeds and lives upon for ever; and the spiritual blessings and benefits that are gotten in him and from him, are as so many dishes of this feast, such as righteousness, pardon of sin, peace and friendship with God, the Spirit, adoption, sanctification, joy in the Holy Ghost, grace and glory, the hope of a room in those mansions that are in his Father's house, of a seat with him at his table and on his throne; even a share in his whole purchase: And is not that a feast? 4. 'Tis honourable and excellent, in respect of its most noble rise, viz. from all eternity, in the bosom of the Father: It bred (to say so) in the King's breast before the foundation of the world was laid; the covenant of redemption was then concluded, and the contract of marriage there drawn, and the blessed project of it then laid down: *Sacrifices and offerings thou didst not desire, (saith the Mediator, Psal 40.) Mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offerings nor sin-offerings thou hast not required: Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.* The Father gives so many to the Son to be redeemed, of whom he willingly, readily and cheerfully accepts, and offers to satisfy for them, which in due time he doth. 5. It is excellent and honourable in this respect, that there was never such a concurrence of so many and so great things to commend and further a marriage as there is in this: Such as the making of the world, men and angels; the incarnation of Christ, or his coming into the world; his preaching, and working of miracles for confirmation of his doctrine; his suffering and dying, rising and ascending; his giving ministers and their gifts; and, to make up the marriage-union, the Spirit from heaven coming along with the word, and working faith in the soul; by which bonds, Christ and the believer are joined together; Christ

by his Spirit apprehending the believer, and the believer apprehending Christ by faith. Was there ever a marriage-contract or union bound up betwixt two such vastly and infinitely distant parties? was there ever such honour and riches attending and following a match; such righteousness, remission of sin, adoption, peace with God, joy of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit, holiness in the beginning and gradual advances of it; fellowship and walking with God, the white Stone, the new Name, the Throne, the Crown, Grace, and Glory, every thing that is good for the Bride here, and glory in heaven; in a word, Jesus Christ, and all the Benefits of his purchase? Were there ever such easy terms and conditions? It is only, *Come to the wedding*; when the King comes a-wooing, let him be welcomed with your heart's consent; when he says, *I am content to marry you*, let your hearts say, *Amen, Lord Jesus, I am content to marry thee, and to be for thee and for none other*. And, may not I add, Was there ever such security and confirmation given of any marriage? 'Tis confirmed by the death of the Bridegroom, he hath sealed his testament with his blood, and there is no annulling nor altering of a man's testament when he is dead: And our Lord Jesus, who was once dead, is now alive, and lives for evermore; he will never die again, nor make another testament. O beloved hearers, all this is to let you see that our Lord is in earnest and very willing to espouse you; and indeed it shall not be his fault if it be not a bargain: And, if it be indeed a bargain betwixt your souls and him, 'tis a very rare and rich one; O the many rare, excellent, noble, notable and none-such privileges and advantages that attend this marriage, and are to be enjoyed by the soul espoused to Christ! even God and Christ, grace and glory, and all that is comprehended under these, belongs to that soul. We must here be silent, lest in speaking of them we darken them by our words; here is an abyss and bottomless depth, ready, as it were, to swallow up words: We confess, we can tell you but very little what they are; nay, if all the ablest and holiest ministers on earth, and all the angels in heaven were joined together, they could not to the full, by very far, tell what an excellent match and marriage this is, even to be matched with the Son of God; and yet this

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privilege and honour have all the saints, all believers, to whom he is *Wonderful and Precious*, tho', alas! not as he ought to be: There is a day coming, when we shall know to satisfaction, *that the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; and that believers are in Christ, and he in them*: We shall then know the now inexpressible and inconceivable advantages of this marriage, *when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and wondred at in all them that believe*: And till that day the one half will never be told us.

The third observation was, *That there are many things to be removed out of the way, and to be done*: Many things to be made ready before this marriage can be made up. 1. There's a natural distance between the parties, that must be removed; God cannot be one flesh with us: And betwixt parties to be married, there must be some suitableness of nature; therefore, to remove this distance, and to bring about the marriage, the Son of God becomes Man, that he may be *Immanuel*, God with us, God in our nature, and so in capacity to be closed with. 2. There is a sinful distance, which also must be removed before this marriage can be made up: For God is a consuming fire to sinners; he and they neither will nor can unite in that posture: Therefore, before an offer of marriage can be made to any purpose, *he must give himself for his Church, that he may sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*; and then it follows, *that he presents her to himself a glorious Church, without spot and wrinkle, or any such thing*. He could not have access to marry his Bride, she was so uncomely, filthy and lothsom, lying in a most pitiful condition, *in her blood*, as *Ezekiel* sets it forth to the life and at great length, *Chap. 16*. Therefore, to cleanse her, he gave himself for her. 3. Ere all this could be done, there behoved a ground to be laid for peace with God the offended Party, who was to be Father-in-law: And here comes in the covenant of redemption, *Psal. 40. 6, 7. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; then said I, Lo, I come, &c.* For taking away the curse, and reconciling the elect to God, the Father says (as it were) I must needs be once in friendship with them, ere I can admit them to my house; and, Son, if thou wilt satisfy my justice, and pay

their debt, I shall give them to thee for a seed, and to be thy Bride and Wife: Well, says Christ the Mediator, Father, I accept of the bargain; *Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God*: Whereupon it comes to pass (as the apostle hath it, 2 Cor. 5. last,) *That he is made sin for us, who knew no sin, and we are made the righteousness of God in him*; For it was as really agreed in the covenant of redemption that he should be made sin for us, as it came to pass in the actual execution of it: And thus way is made for the marriage. 4. When this is done, the marriage must be proclaimed through the world by the preached-gospel, the contract must be opened up and read, and sinners consent called for. We are told therein, that *the Word is made flesh, and dwelt among us*; and, because *no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he declares him*; as it is, *John* 1. 14, 15. He comes and reveals more clearly the contract, first in his own Person and by his own ministry, and then by sending his servants, and telling that all things are ready. 5. The last thing to be removed is the uncircumcision and stupidity of our hearts. Naturally we are given to slight him in his offers, to refuse to open to him, and to let him in when he knocks; to make excuse, to delay, shift and put him off; nay, to refuse to entertain his proposal of marriage, and to give him a repulse: Therefore he comes by his Spirit, and *puts in his finger by the hole of the door*, and lets some myrrhe drop on the handles of the lock, and powerfully, but sweetly, inclines the heart to cast itself open to him; and then he performs the promises of sanctification, *circumcising the heart to love him with all the heart, and with all the soul*; as it is, *Deut.* 30. 6. And all these promises are contrived, framed and provided to meet with difficulties in us. We are told, *John* 6. 44. that *no man can come to Christ, except the Father that sent him draw him*; and, *Psal.* 110. 3. it is promised, that *in the day of his power his people shall be willing*; and *whoever* (being made willing) *cometh, shall in nowise be cast out*, *John* 6. 37.

The fourth observation is, *That by the preaching of the gospel, whithersoever it cometh, and by the great things made offer of therein, all things are made ready*: Obstructions and



and whatever might hinder the closing of the marriage, are removed. The Father is ready, having declared his willingness to give his consent, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him*, Matth. 3. I am well satisfied with him, take him to you for your Head and Husband; The Son is ready to take all by the hand that will embrace him; pardon of sin, peace with God, sanctification, the mansion, &c. are ready to be bestowed; the feast is ready, the satlings are prepared; the promises are filled with every necessary good thing, *there is bread enough in the prodigal's Father's house and to spare*; the contract is ready, and an offer of it made on the Bridegroom's side; the terms are drawn up and put in form, and all things agreed upon and ready, even to the subscription: And there is no more required, but that the hearers of this gospel heartily consent to take him, and submit to his righteousness and dominion; which if they do, all things shall be theirs, even life eternal, and all things that may fit them for it, promises for this life, and that which is to come, and Christ engaged to keep the bargain: And this is it that is preached every day to you, tho', alas! unsuitably; so that 'tis not now, *Who shall go up to heaven, and bring down Christ from above? or, who shall descend unto the deep, and bring him up from the dead?* that we may get him to marry; but *the righteousness of faith saith, The word is near thee, even in thy mouth*, &c. Christ's consent is not to be asked or brought from afar, for he hath declared it in his word; and the terms of the contract are, *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*, Rom. 10. 8, 9. Engage therefore honestly with Christ, and keep to him; deny yourselves, and close with him; give up yourselves to him, and ye shall be saved; And that is all one with this, to be married to him. Yea, the day of the marriage is set, and that is the day of the gospel; the Bridegroom is come to the Church, the table is covered, and the ministers the Bridegroom's friends are waiting on to espouse you to him, and to make up the marriage; so that all things meet and requisite for making peace betwixt God and sinners are ready.

The *fifth* observation was, *That Christ the Bridegroom and his Father are very willing to have the match made up and the marriage compleated.* Therefore doth he send forth his servants with a strict commission, not only to tell sinners that all things are ready, but to bid them come to the marriage: Yea, he not only wills them to tell that all things are ready, and to invite, but to *compel them* (as *Luke* hath it, *Chap. 14. 23.*) to come in; to stir them up, and press them to it; to threaten them if they come not; and to accept of no refusal or nay-say. The evidences of his willingness are many, which I will not now insist upon; as, that he hath made the feast, and such a feast, and prepared so for it, and given himself to bring it about, and keeps up the offer and proclamation of the marriage, even after it is slighted: All these, and many mo, tell plainly that the Father and the Son are most heartily willing; therefore they expostulate when this marriage is refused, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you, but you would not!* *Matth. 23.* *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou, even thou, hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace!* *Luke 19.* All these sad complaints, that *Israel would not bearken to his voice, and his people would have none of him,* *Psal. 81. 7.* that *he came to his own, and his own received him not,* *John 1. 11.* and that *they will not come to him that they might have life,* *John 5. 40.* make out his willingness abundantly and undeniably.

The *sixth* observation was, *That the great work of the ministers of the gospel is, to invite unto, and to endeavour to bring this marriage betwixt Christ and souls to a close.* The servants are sent out for this very end, to conclude the bargain: Tho' he be Lord of all, yet he would not employ in this work, angels; neither would he speak immediately by his own voice from heaven, for by reason of his greatness we could not have endured that way of wooing; but faith on the matter to men, subject to the like passions and infirmities, Go tell that the King hath such a Son, and that ye are sent out to woo in his name; and make not only offer of marriage, but request, intreat, persuade, pray and obtest, yea command and compel them to come to the marriage, by holding forth the curse which comes

comes on them that will not come: And hence are those denounced woes, and shaking of the dust off their feet, for a testimony against them that will not come.

The *seventh* observation was, *That it is the duty of all to whom the good news of this marriage come, to come to it; and, when they are invited to it, presently without all delay to yield.* Needs there any proof of this? does not the Master's sending, and the servants coming, call for it? do not his preparing of all things, his inviting to the marriage, and his expostulating with them that come not, and our own great necessity, urgently require it?

The *eighth* and last observation was, *That all they that come may expect a very good and heartsome welcome.* None need to fear that they shall not be made welcome; seeing they are come not uncalled, they shall not sit unserved: The Lord will not look down on such as come; nay, he is waiting on to welcome them, and to meet them as it were mid-way; as we see in the parable of the prodigal, *Luke 15.* his father stays not till his son come to him, but seeing him afar-off coming, he runs with speed to meet him, and then most affectionately embraces him, and falls on his neck and kisses him: And if the poor child should say, *I am not worthy to be called a son*; he answers that, not suffering him to speak out all that he had resolved to say: Even when the debauched runagate had spent all by riotous living, and would fain have told out the sad and shameful story of his gross miscarriages and great unworthiness, he interrupts him, and says, in a manner, Son, hold thy peace as to that; I know well it is grievous to thee; go quickly, and put on the robe, the ring and the shoes that are provided for thee.

I come now, in the *third* place, to make application of all: And, is it possible to speak or hear of this subject as becomes? who is sufficient for these things, to speak suitably in the name of the Lord, and to lay before you this contract of marriage with such a Bridegroom? Beloved hearers, are ye in a suitable posture to tryst with him? do ye think that ye are for this marriage? is it your serious purpose to close the bargain with him? If so, pray the Lord to give us to speak, and you to hear the word in such manner as it may be a marriage-day indeed.

There are very good news here, and blessed eternally b God, that ever we heard them, or had them to speak o and that ye have them yet to hear; they should make you very souls, in a manner, flighter within you, and make you to rouse up yourselves to welcome them with gladness of heart.

And therefore, 1. We would exhort you all to believe this report. There are, alas! but few who do indeed believe, that the eternal God hath this design of marriage betwixt him and sinners: Therefore, let not your hearts be straitned, only believe that this is the good word of God, that these are the faithful and true sayings of him that cannot lie, and that he is waiting on to ratify them to all who give them credit. 'Tis somewhat hard to deliver or receive a word of threatening in faith, but, in some respect, more hard to believe a word of promise, and of consolation; it is proportionably hard to look upon this as God's own offering of a marriage with his Son, as if he himself were by *viva voce* speaking it out of heaven, and to believe that this offer is really his: And therefore, as I desire (as his servant) to speak to you, so I would, again and again, obtest you to be roused up, and to rouse up yourselves to believe it. 2. Rouse, stretch and enlarge your understandings, and your hearts and affections for beholding, conceiving and embracing this rich bargain of grace: O consider seriously, from whom it is, for what end it is, how it is brought about, and doth come to you; the height and depth, the length and breadth whereof is inconceivable: Be holily amazed and wonder, that the offer of this marriage comes to you, and that he is content to marry you. 3. In a word, would you know what we have to do with you, or what is our commission to you this day? This is even it, to tell you that the King hath made a marriage for his Son, and hath prepared and made all things ready for reuniting you to himself; yea, this same King that hath made this wedding ready, and hath carved out this way of throughing his design, by speaking to you in his word by his servants, speaks to you by us, and we speak to you in his name, and tell you, that our blessed Lord Jesus is wooing you; we declare, publish and proclaim it: O take notice of it. Our Lord Jesus is  
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not far to seek, he is here waiting on to close the bargain with you: This is our errand, to proclaim these glad tidings to you; and what gladder tidings could you wish, than to have it told you, that ye may be happy and easily happy, and that, if ye be content to be so, there is nothing that might mar this happiness, but it is removed and taken out of the way? Is not the Father ready? He hath given his consent: Is not the Bridegroom ready, when he hath done so much, and is waiting on your consent? The feast is ready, and the garments are ready, and there is no more to do, but to take and put them on; and faith exercised on him will do both: The contract is ready, and there is nothing to be changed or altered in it; and he is ready to accept of you, if ye will accept of him: Our blessed Lord Jesus says, he is content to marry you; and there is no more to do, but to subscribe your name to the contract. If you want clothes, he will give them to you; if ye want a house, if ye want meat or drink, he will provide for you; whatever it be that you really stand in need of, for soul or body, in time or eternity, ye shall have it from him: The promises are filled with all things that pertain to life and godliness, to this life and to that which is to come; there is in effect nothing wanting but your consent, and let not that be wanting, I beseech you.

In prosecuting this purpose, I shall speak a little, 1. To those to whom the offer is made, or to those who are called. 2. To what they are called to. 3. To the terms on which they are called. 4. To the manner how ye should come. 5. To the peremptoriness of the call, and to the necessity of coming. And, 6. (if it be possible to win at it) A word to some motives, whereby ye may be pressed to come, and not to neglect the opportunity of such a precious season of grace.

For the *First*; It is not one or two, or some few that are called, nor the great only, nor the small only, nor the holy only, nor the profane only, but ye are all bidden, the call comes to all and every one of you in particular, poor and rich, high and low, holy and profane; Ho (proclaimeth the Lord, as it were, with an Oyes, Isa. 55. 1.) every one that thirsts, come; and he that hath no money, let him come; whosoever will, let him come and take of the water

*water of life freely*, Rev. 22. 17. Our blessed Lord Jesus is not straitned in his call ; and we may humbly say in some measure, that we are not straitned in our bowels ; in his name we invite all of you, and make offer of Jesus Christ to be your Husband, that ye may have *a room among them that stand by, and be with him for ever* ; I say, We make this offer to all of you, to you that are *Atheists*, to you that are *Graceless*, to you that are *Ignorant*, to you that are *Hypocrites*, to you that are *Lazy* and *Lukewarm*, to the civil and to the profane ; we pray, we beseech, we obtest you all to come to the wedding ; *Call* (saith the Lord) *the blind, the maimed, the halt, &c.* bid them all come, yea, *compel them to come in* : Grace can do mo and greater wonders than to call such ; it can not only make the offer of the marriage to them, but it can make up the match effectually betwixt Christ and them : We will not, we dare not say, that all of you will get Christ for a Husband ; but we do most really offer him to you all, and it shall be your own fault if ye want him and go without him. And therefore, before we proceed any further, we do solemnly protest, and before God and his Son Jesus Christ, take instruments this day, that this offer is made to you ; and that it is told to you in his name, that the Lord Jesus is willing to match with you, even the profaneest and most graceless of you, if ye be willing to match with him ; and he earnestly invites you to come to the wedding : If you can touch at any thing on his side, that is not ready, or at any thing on your side, but it may thro' grace be made ready if ye will come, you may ; but 'tis impossible, for *the covenant is well ordered and sure*, and that *in all things* ; and these words are not the words of men, but the words of *the true and faithful Witness*, which ye must count and reckon for, when we are dead and gone : *He hath killed his oxen and fatlings, and prepared his dinner, and bid his guests ; all things are ready*, in the due order and manner, whether on your side or on his, if ye be willing to step to and make the bargain : He hath drawn up the contract, and sent us out with it to you, to crave your subscription ; and, if ye be ready for that, he craves no more of you. Now, I put you all to it, whether will ye subscribe it or not ? And I would not put one of you with-

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out the reach of this invitation. However we be, alas! much carnal in speaking his mind, yet we desire not to obscure nor limit our Lord's grace; he calls all of you to the wedding, he hath sent us out as his servants (tho' of all the most unworthy) to close and conclude the contract of marriage with you this day, if you be willing. Come then, O come and subscribe, and it shall be in very deed a bargain. If ye can thro' grace say from your hearts, *We will take him*; then I say to you, *Take him, and have him with the Father's blessing*. Our commission is not only to offer him, and to invite you to take him; but to close a bargain betwixt him and you who are content to take him; we would (as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 11. 2.) *espouse you to one Husband, that we might present you a chaste virgin to Christ*, and have you *band-fast*ed to him, as the word is: And this is very well becoming one of the days of the Son of Man, and one of such seasons of his grace, to make this offer to great and small, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, gracious and graceless, hypocrites and profane; there is here no exception of persons with him; the blessed God is content to match with the most graceless and godless of you, as well as with those who are gracious and godly: *There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner*, and the price was paid for the elect that are yet graceless, as well as for these of them who are now gracious; for all were once in the same condition: Therefore look not with narrow and straitned hearts on the rich and liberal allowance of our blessed Lord Jesus.

But, *Secondly*, What is it that we call you to, when we bid you come to the marriage? 'Tis not to the communion only, 'tis not to any of Christ's benefits only, 'tis not to say at first-hand confidently that all is yours, or to have a sure knowledge (as ye call it) and perswasion at the very first that it is so; tho' I heartily wish that ye may find this perswasion on solid and good grounds; but it is first and mainly to marry the Bridegroom, and then to come to the feast; We call you to believe, and we declare in his name, that, if ye will betake yourselves to him in good earnest, ye shall be saved; if ye will, as it were, put your hand to the pen, and subscribe yourselves heartily content to take him, ye shall most certainly have him and all his

his benefits. Ye that are profane, take him, but not to live still in your profanity, but to study holiness in all manner of conversation, in his strength; ye that are self-righteous, take him, but not to live still in the good conceit of your self-righteousness, but to renounce it, and to take him for your righteousness; ye that are blind, take him, but not to live still in your blindness, but to grow in grace and in the knowledge of him: Whatever ye be, and whatever ill aileth you, take him, but not to continue in the ill, but to get it amended. This, sure, is no less than to call you to the communion, yea it is more; whether therefore ye come to the communion or not, we call and invite you all to come to Christ, and to marry him; which if ye do, we dare promise you, in his name, begun communion with him here, and full communion with him in heaven hereafter.

*Thirdly*, What are the terms on which ye are called and may warrantably come to this marriage? I need not stand on the terms on his side, nor to tell you what he promiseth; 'tis this in a word, *I will be for thee*: He is content to make over all that is his to you; pardon of sin, justification, sanctification, his Spirit to quicken you, even his whole purchase to enrich you: In sum, (as it is, 1 Cor. 1. 31.) *He is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*; he hath made *all things yours* (as it is, 1 Cor. 3. 21.) *and in him ye are compleat*, (as the apostle hath it, Col. 2. 10.) Ye need never go out of him, to seek for any thing truly good that ye stand in need of. And on the other hand, What seeks he of you, but *to be for him, and not for another*? as it is, *Hos. 3*. He seeks no hard condition: In sum, it may be comprehended in that word, 1 Cor. 1. 31. *That he that glorieth may glory in the Lord*; not to glory or boast in any thing, or in ourselves, but of him, and in him. But, for clearness cause, I shall draw the terms on your side to these three. 1. You must deny yourself, your lusts, and idols, and your own righteousness: *Where is boasting then?* (saith the apostle, *Rom. 3. 27.*) *It is excluded*; *by what law?* of works? *no, but the law of faith*: Ye then that would marry Christ, and share indeed in the feast, ye must have a sight of that which ye want, and of your own inability to make it up, and



and that ye are undone in yourselves without him; *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*, that is, To him that expects nothing by his works, but betakes himself to Christ and his righteousness for his justification before God: And that is no unreasonable condition. 2. As ye would not glory in yourselves, so ye would glory in him. Whatever ye deny in yourselves, ye would put him in the room of it; if ye dare not lippen or trust your souls to your own righteousness, lippen or trust them to his: He says, I am content to pay your debt; and, since ye cannot pay your own debt yourselves, say humbly to him, Blessed Lord Jesus, pay our debt for us; *He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. 10. 3. When he offers himself, take him thus, and let faith say, So be it, Lord; I accept of the bargain. O! hold to it, and quit it not. 3. It is required that ye shall be his, and have no power over yourselves; and this takes in sanctification, dying to sin and living to righteousness, adorning the gospel, living answerably to the several relations ye stand in: For tho' mortification and holiness be not the cause for which he marries, yet it is a condition of the contract; and it well becomes his Bride to be dutiful; *Thou shalt be for me, and I will be for thee*: If he will graciously please to be for us, 'tis all the reason in the world that we should be for him. Now we know somewhat of the terms, which may all come in under these three; there are many conditions on his side, and but few on ours.

*Fourthly*, Ye would consider the peremptoriness of this call, to accept of and to marry our Lord Jesus Christ on these terms. 'Tis not an ordinary compliment, but proposed by the King the Father, and by the King's Son the Bridegroom; he sends out his servants, who are come to call you peremptorily: And there are *three peremptories*, that this offer and call hath with it; all which three we carry in our commission, and crave of you to subscribe to them. The *first* whereto is, That ye take no other husband but this Bridegroom: There is no latitude left to you in this; ye must by no means engage with any other: 'Tis only for Jesus Christ that we woo, and we seek of you

you that ye would give him your souls, your hearts and affections, that ye may be devoted to him and to no other ; and therefore we intimate to you that are married and joined to idols, that ye must be divorced from those, and betake you to him alone. The *second* is, the peremptoriness of the terms we speak of; we cannot, and ye must not alter one jot or tittle. Ye must deny yourselves, ye must be content to be divorced from your lusts and idols, ye must renounce your own righteousness, and give up with the law your first husband, considered as a covenant of works, and run out from the curses thereof to him, which ye will never do, till ye see your own righteousness to be as filthy rags, and reject it, as part of your indictment, that ever ye trusted to it. Ye must *forget your father's house*. 2. As you must deny yourselves, so you must close with Christ, and embrace him for your Husband and Lord : Do not think that ye will or can dwell beside him, that ye can sit and hear him, if ye marry him not. 3. Ye must be devoted to him in your conversation, he must needs be your King as well as your Priest: Ye must forsake father and mother, and all your kindred, and betake you to him ; and ye must take up and keep house with him, you must dwell with him, and study to be answerable to the marriage-tye and obligation put upon you. We dare dispense with none of the *three*. The *third* peremptory is this, As ye must engage with no other, and as ye must not alter the terms, so ye must not delay to come and close the bargain, ye must not put off till to-morrow, nay not an hour ; *All things are ready*. Just now, *Now is the accepted time* : Here stands the blessed Bridegroom, here are the conditions and terms on which he will marry you ; and we, as the Bridegroom's friends, stand ready to espouse you to him. We dare not be answerable to our Master, nor can we be answerable to our trust and commission, if we shuffle by or thrust out any of you, if ye do not thrust out yourselves ; nor may we admit of an excuse from any of you : And therefore let me again say to you, that here is not only a marriage, and of all marriages the most excellent ; but let me beseech and obtest you to come to the wedding ; either come, or give a reason why ye

ye will not, or cannot: As you can assign no relevant reason for your not coming, we dare not accept of any irrelevant reason, nor admit of any answer but this, that ye will take him; we dare admit of no excuse: ye must not shift nor delay. Ye would think that those who were bidden, *Luke 14* might have come, when they had seen their farm, and proved their oxen; but that would not be with them: So I say, it will not be with you, to shift this offer. He is here waiting on, to see who will consent and say, *Even so I take him*; say it, O say it seriously, and abide by it.

O! are there any here now looking up to him? are there any here that would fain have it a closed bargain? are there any here that believe these things as the truths of God? Then we pray you let them sink down into your hearts, and come. And, to press this a little further, let me ask, What can hinder the making of this bargain? Is it the want of notice or timely intimation of it? That cannot be, ye are clearly convinced of the contrary: Is it because ye will or can be happy without him? Wo to that happiness: Is it any difficulty standing in the way? That shall be removed; yea, as to him it is removed already, and shall be as to you on your closing with him. Pose and put your own hearts to it then; Is there any of you that dare or can find in your hearts to refuse? The Lord is waiting on, his faithfulness is engaged to make out what he offereth; He stretcheth out his hand, and saith, *Even so I take you*, if ye will take me: Are ye content to stretch forth your hand, and to say, *Even so I take thee, blessed Lord Jesus*? Or, if this be not win at to satisfaction, are there any rousing and stretching themselves to essay how it will go with them? what are ye doing? is it a bargain or not? Ye must say, Yea, or Nay, and that even now. We suppose ye will not say downright Nay; tho' more than probably many will delay: But this must not be; the table may be drawn, other guests may be called in, and ye removed. We cannot allow you an hour's time to advise, especially from indifferency; yea, if ye begin to take advisement for shifting a present closure, Christ's call and invitation, and your consenting will readily cool upon your hand. *Paul* says, that he consulted not

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*with flesh and blood*: So must not ye consult with flesh and blood in this matter, ye must cast away the beggar's cloke, be content to deny yourself, quit your lusts, and close with him presently, or ye may never have the like opportunity. There is a necessity imposed on you from the command to come, from the curse and prejudice that abides you, and will certainly overtake you if you come not; ye will be eternally miserable without him, there is no happiness but in him. The King is on his throne, the table is set and covered, the day is fixed, his servants invite in his name; come therefore, come without further lingering, dallying, shifting or delay: Alas! there are too many days put by already, ye must put by no mo.

Now, let me speak a word further to this purpose, What can marr the matter? what can obstruct its being a bargain? Certainly it must be one of *three*: Either, 1. Because ye are not content with the Bridegroom; Or, 2. Because ye are not content with the terms; Or, 3. Because ye are not content with yourselves, or with something in yourselves.

As for the *First*, I suppose ye can say nothing against the Bridegroom: Is there any other like to him, or that can compare with him? I appeal even to you atheists, and profane wretches, that live and ly in your lusts, is there a beloved like this Beloved? hath he a match in heaven or earth? is he not the King's Son? And if ye ask who that is, ye may hear and know from *Psal. 24. The King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts, strong and mighty in battle*; and from *Heb. 1. 3. The Brightness of the Father's Glory, the express Image of his Person, upholding all things by the word of his power*: There is none like him, but the Father, and the holy Spirit; and, as God, he is One with them. Ye have both the question and answer, *Cant. 5. 9. What is thy Beloved more than another beloved? What is yonder Christ, of whom we hear so much? The answer is given (which we cannot stay now to paraphrase upon) He is white and ruddy, the Chiefest or Standard-bearer among ten thousands, fairer than the Sons of men. And if ye would know him more particularly, His head is as the most fine gold; he is God: His locks (or his hair) are bushy and black as a raven*; there is not the least unseemliness

ness, even in those things that would, to our thinking, seem less necessary, as his hair : Yea, *his very garments smell of myrrhe, aloes, and cassia*, (as it is, *Psal. 45.*) *His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set* ; O so lovely as his properties are ! *His cheeks, as beds of spices, as sweet flowers* ; *his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrhe* ; *his hands as gold-rings set with beryl* ; *his belly (or bowels of love and affection) like the bright ivory overlaid with sapphires* ; *his legs like pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold* ; *his countenance like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars* : O so excellent and stately ! *His mouth is most sweet*, or (as the word is) *sweetness*, in the abstract ; never soul kissed his mouth, but there was a bond thereby laid on it, that it could never again part with him : In a word, *He is altogether lovely*, or (as the word is) *all desires* ; there is nothing that souls can desire, but it is in him ; and there is nothing in him, but what has desirableness in it : *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend* (says the Bride) *O ye daughters of Jerusalem* : This is he, he is sure no common or ordinary beloved ; see if among all the beloveds in heaven or earth there be any like him : O ye despisers and slighers of the Son of God, put yourselves to it, is there any like him to be found ? has he not the preference of and the preheminance above all beloveds ? *He is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth* ; *he is the mighty God, the wonderful Counsellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*. It would well become us all to be wondring at him, and to be drawing near to him, to behold him in his beauty, to go forth and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals. O take a stayed view of him in his personal excellencies, and in the excellent qualifications of his mediatory office, and it cannot be that on this ground ye will cast at the match : Will any of you dare to say it, or to abide by it, that ye will not marry Christ, because ye think nothing of him, or because he is not worthy to be thought of ? We suppose, none will do so.

If it be the *Second*, viz. *the terms*, that ye are not content with : Ye would have Christ, grace, and glory, and every good thing ; but here it sticketh, you look at it as

an hard matter to be denied to yourself, and to be wholly God's, to renounce your own righteousness, and your lusts, and your idols, to be absolutely devoted to him, and wholly dependent on him in your walk: As *the evil and the slothful servant* called him a *hard master*; so do many think of him, tho' they will not down-right say so much in express words. But I would ask you, Is there any unreasonable thing here? or, shall all those terms be sought after, in some respect, in the marriage of a poor creature like yourselves; and will ye deny them to Christ? 1. If you get his righteousness, should ye not deny your own? If ye come under the covenant of grace with him, is there any prejudice to lay by the covenant of works? If ye get him for your second Husband, and infinitely best, is it any prejudice to quit your first Husband *the law*? And, in that respect, is it reasonable to cast at the bargain, because it is free? 2. Is it not reasonable that ye should give him the room of all things? If he be able to fill the room of all, let him have his room, as being well worthy of it: It is your advantage to quit your lusts and sinful pleasures, your covetousness, pride, vanity, self-conceit, &c. to exchange all for him; and, if ye be not content of this condition, ye say he is not worth the having. 3. Is it not reasonable that ye should be devoted to him in your conversation? that ye should no longer play the harlot, but be as a chaste virgin to him? Is it any advantage to you to follow your idols, that will go betwixt you and happiness? If heaven be an advantage, it is your advantage to quit them and be for Christ: Or, is it any prejudice to be holy? or, will ye quit Christ, because ye must be holy? or, will ye refuse him, because he will not suffer you, to your ruin, to take your own will as formerly? Yea, it is not only reasonable, but very good and profitable; nay, there is a necessity you should be holy: And, may not love to him loose your heart from sin? There was another sort of consultation, and other bowels of love, at the first making of the bargain betwixt the Father and the Son; and it was calculated for more honourable designs, and levelled to more noble ends than any thing the devil, or the world, or the flesh can promise to you: And any of you that will stand and stick at the terms, that are

to

So just, equitable, and every way reasonable and easy withal, we take your own consciences to be witnesses that they are so, and you dare not avouch the denial of their being so. If ye be content to take him, to be reconciled and made friends with God by his satisfaction, and to be made holy by his sanctifying Spirit, to be for him as he shall be for you; it is a bargain: And what, I pray, ails you at such a bargain? If this be not made, ye shall never be able to make such another. What should ye do then, but come to the wedding? 'Tis not time to dispute or debate, but to close: Say, O say sincerely, as these do, *Jer. 3. 22. Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God: When he says, as he did to them, Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings; turn it over to him, and say, Behold, we come unto thee.*

*Thirdly,* Are ye not content with yourselves, or with something in yourselves? Do ye indeed think and say, that it is a good bargain, and that the terms are very reasonable and easy, and we have nothing to say against them, but we have (alas!) much to say of and against ourselves; the bargain pleaseth us wondrous well, and so do the terms, but we are not at all pleased with ourselves? I answer, 1. May ye not then the better quit and deny yourselves, and take Christ in the room and place of *self*? 2. I answer, Christ makes no such objection; he bids the most prophane, the most ignorant and graceless wretch, the most hypocritical dissembler, that never knew what it was to be honest, come, and assures them that they shall be welcome, if they will come indeed.

*Object.* But I can do nothing, I cannot keep a word that I say to Christ. I answer, Engage and consent to close with Christ on his own terms, and doing and keeping shall follow; to give thy consent, is that which thou art now called to, and he engages to help thee to perform.

*Object.* But, shall I take on an engagement, presently to break it again? I answer, If indeed thou consent, thou mayest fail and break, but the covenant will never be utterly broken nor dissolved; yea, thou shalt have Surety for thy keeping of it; *Forasmuch as* (saith the apostle, *Heb. 7. 22.*) *Jesus was made Surety of a better Testament.*

If ye *object* and say, That ye have much sin, that ye are lothsome and abominable ; subscribe this contract and bargain, and ye have a free and full discharge of all your debt ; *I will* (saith the Lord, *Hosea 2. 19.*) *betrothe thee unto me in loving-kindness and mercies* : He will pardon your iniquities ; there is no exact or severe seeking and searching out of the debt here, where 'tis ingenuously taken with, but rather a covering of it : He *will* also *cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols.*

But it may be thou wilt *object*, and say, I will rather purpose than engage, because I fear I shall break it.

*Answer*, But, is it likely that thou wilt make good such a purpose, who dar'st not engage ? Or, will purposes and resolutions do the business, without performing ? Purposes of marriage make not the marriage ; it is actual consent and engaging which doth that.

But thou wilt *object*, and say, Alas ! I am not in a right frame, I am very confused, all things are wrong with me.

*Answer*, What is this thou sayest ? Will your frame be amended without Christ ? will those swarms of corruptions be beat out before thou take in *the King of glory, who is strong and mighty in battle* ?

But thou wilt *object*, I am not clear as to my interest.

*Answer*, Wilt thou not consent till thou be clear ? that is as much as to say, thou art doubting, but that thou wilt not put it out of doubt : If thou be unclear as to thy subscription, rather subscribe and write thy name over again ; if ye have not at all subscribed, take now the pen and do it ; say, Lord Jesus, I come to thee, and will be thine.

*Object* Alas ! fain would I come to the wedding, but I cannot come, it will not do with me ; I would fain believe, but my faith is not prompt and ready. *I answer*, Is not the covenant provided with an answer to that also ? It calls for nothing but for your subscribing ; and, if ye say ye cannot, look well that it be not a shift : It comes to this, Yea, or Nay ; and if ye say, ye cannot say *Yea* in faith, which yet thou wouldst fain be at ; is there not a promise of grace, that tho' your hand be as it were withered, if ye mint and essay, you shall be enabled to stretch



stretch it forth? Faith may come, in the very essaying to grip him; only essay it, and it shall go with you.

*Object.* I have essayed it often, and it hath not gone with me. *Answer,* Essay it again, and cast a new knot; if your evidence be not clear, subscribe over again.

*Object.* But it goes not with me; when all is done, I cannot believe; I would subscribe, but I cannot write (as it were) I cannot distinctly act faith. *Answer,* What is that? Our Lord stands not on that; tho' you cannot write well, do as ye can: 'Tis strange to see, how some's subscription is almost like a scratching with crow-toes, yet 'tis a valid subscription; some again will write down their mark in place of their name, and that also, where it is well known, is admitted as valid. If you cannot (as it were) write your name in fair and legible letters, set down some mark, if it were but two scores or lines in any form or figure; if ye cannot act faith so distinctly, come on as you may; if ye cannot to your satisfaction say, *Yea*, with the heart, say it with the mouth, striving and longing to have thy heart brought up; force thyself (if I may speak so) to believing: *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,* Rom. 10. 9. Endeavour to make thy mouth engage thine heart; bind thyself fast to Christ, even in a manner whether thou wilt or not; Act faith with the understanding, labouring honestly to bring up thy will and affections; and, tho' ye win not now to a faith that is distinct, it shall come in a due time; Essay to set open the door, and it shall go with you.

*Object.* But my heart says, All these are but fair words. *Answer,* Away with that blasphemy. They are the truths of God: Essay then, O essay seriously this way of believing, and ye shall find power meeting you. The pen is, as it were, lying by you; and albeit ye cannot write well and be distinct, take the pen, and Christ shall (as it were) lead your hand, and guide it to write so as it shall pass in heaven for a subscribed consent: Set yourselves to give him a welcome, and he shall account it to be a welcome. Say now, what more ye have to say; lay out your scruples; this word, *All things are ready*, will answer them

all: The garment is ready to be put on, yea, Jesus Christ is your Wedding-garment; take and put him on: He is the cure for all your diseases, apply him for the cure of them all. Ye cannot certainly be clothed, before you put on the garment; neither can ye be healed, before ye apply the cure; ye cannot by any means be rich, till ye marry him. But, beside all these, there are several other needlessly disquieting scruples, there are many other shifts (and, alas that there should be such trifling, if I may call it so, such whining, as it were, and standing on ceremonies (to speak so) with our Lord!) among which this is one, I wot not if I be in the covenant and contract of redemption, I know not if I be one of God's elect. *Ans.* What is this? ye know not well what ye say: Have ye any thing to do with that secret by a leap and at first hand? Are ye not called to marry Christ? is not that his revealed will to you? I protest, in his name, this is the thing that ye are called to; and will ye make an exception, where he has made none? Or, will ye shift obedience to a clear command, upon a supposed decree, which you cannot know but by the effects? Will ye reason so in the matter of your eating and drinking? Upon a supposition that God hath decreed that ye shall die to-morrow, or within a few days; will ye this day not take your dinner, nor make use of any refreshment, till that supposed day come? Or, because ye know not if God hath appointed you to live so and so long, will ye forbear therefore your callings! Or, will any of you, in seeking after a match in the world, reason so? Will ye not seek after nor marry such a woman, till ye be clear that God hath decreed her to be your wife? Which or whom would ye marry at this rate of reasoning? But, 2. Because there is a sort of faculty and facility here to dispute against God, I answer by way of question, Were there ever any that had that doubt cleared to them before they came to Christ? Who ever would have come to him, if they had stayed till that had been taken out of the way? Or, hath the Lord told that to any before they came? Hath he said to them, Believe, for ye are elected? But his method is thus, Believe, and ye shall know in due time that ye are elected. 3. Is there any that can say, that the offer or the

the refusal of the match depended on this? If any of you will say, Because I was not elected, he refused me; he will answer, *How often would I have gathered you?* And there will need no more ground for sentencing professors of the gospel to destruction, than this, Man, woman, thou hadst the offer of the Gospel, and refusedst it; therefore go to thy place: He will not judge you according to the decree of reprobation, but according to his call, and your disobedience to it. And further, ye may take Christ's Answer to this Objection, from *John 6. 39.* where there are two wills, or rather two things willed, of equal extent, betwixt the Father and Christ in the covenant of redemption, under which all the elect come: The first is, *ver. 39. This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing:* But, as if he had said, This is not it that ye have to do with at first-hand; therefore, *ver. 40.* he says, *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life:* Not that all the elect should know that they are elected, before they believe; but that he that believes in him, may know that he is elected. He gives the same promise to them that believe, that is given to them that are elected: And they are distinguished, because he would have them to come under distinct considerations.

And now, to conclude, Is there not need, great need to come? and have ye not good warrant to come? Lay by, therefore, seeking satisfaction to sense and carnal reason: And, while the Lord says, *All things are ready, come to the marriage;* it will be greatly to your prejudice, to sit or shift the invitation. Ye have the contract laid before you, alter not the terms, dispute not, delay not: This is our commission to you to-day; we tell you, that the King hath made ready for the feast, yea, all things are ready; come then, and let there be no more debate about the matter. If ye will but say it, and say it in earnest, *Here, Lord Jesus, I give up myself to thee; and, though my consent be now but confused, I shall endeavour, thro' grace, to give it more clearly and distinctly another time,* it shall go well with you: Only deliver up yourselves to him; and, in the Lord's name, I tell you, that ye shall

be dearly welcome. As many as come humbly lothing themselves, wondring at the free grace of God, and highly esteeming of precious and lovely Jesus, and adventuring to hazard their souls on him on his own terms, and to take him for their Husband and Lord; it shall not be accounted presumption in them so to do: Nay (as it is, *Cant. 3.*) *The bottom of his chariot is paved with love, and 'tis for the daughters of Jerusalem;* it is made for carrying and keeping believers. Leap hither (if I may speak so) and ye will fall soft, into a sweetly perfumed and soft bed, even in the arms of Christ. There was never a carpet, never a feather or down-bed so soft as that is; only come and cast yourselves over on it. Tho' ye think that ye cannot apprehend and take hold of him, he can and will apprehend and take hold of you; and he is so very tender-hearted, that he will kiss you, and even weep over you for joy (as it were) on your neck: And if ye have no garments, rings or jewels (to speak so) to adorn you, he will give these to you. Come forward then, come, O! come, and let it be a day of covenanting with him: And, in sign and token thereof, give up your names to him; and, for confirmation, take the seal of his covenant, the sacrament with your hand, and bless him with your heart, that so heartily welcomes you: And the blessing of God shall come upon you that come on these terms.



## A Sermon preached after the Communion,

On *Philip. 1. 27.* *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.*

**T**HERE are two great works that the ministers of the gospel have to do: One is to engage people to Christ, and to perswade them to receive him and close with him; the other is to induce them to walk worthy of him, *Col. 2. 6.* *As ye have (saith the apostle) received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* Paul, thro' the hand of the Lord with him, had engaged the *Philippians* to close with Christ, and, as it were, to conclude the contract betwixt him and them; and now, being aged and in prison,