

You that have the first fruits will groan within yourselves after the full harvest, and satisfying fruition; you will not be so taken with things below, as to be content with the best lot on earth for your everlasting portion. O! if these communicated drops be so sweet, what is there in Christ the fountain?

And thus I have opened the method of grace in bringing home Christ and his benefits to God's elect by union, in order to communion with him.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.



SERMON IX.

Containing the first general Use of Exhortation, inviting all Men to apply JESUS CHRIST.

MATTH. xi. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

THE *impetration* of our redemption by Jesus Christ, being finished in the first part, and the way and means by which Christ is *applied* to sinners in the foregoing part of this *treatise*; I am now orderly come to the general *use* of the whole; which in the first place shall be by way of *exhortation*, to invite and persuade all men to come to Christ; who, in all the former sermons, had been represented in his *garments of salvation*, red in his apparel, prepared and offered to sinners as their all-sufficient and only remedy: And in the following sermons, will be represented in his *perfumed garments* coming out of his *ivory palaces*, Psalm xlv. 8. to allure and draw all men unto him.

For a general head to this use, which will be large, I have chosen this scripture, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

These words are the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, in which there is a vital, ravishing sound: It is your mercy to have such a joyful sound in your ears this day. And in them I will consider their *dependence*, *parts*, and *scope*.

As to their *dependence*, it is manifest they have an immediate relation to the foregoing verse, wherein Christ opens his commission, and declares the fulness of this authority and saving power, and the impossibility of coming to God any other way. "All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: Neither knoweth any man the Father

“ save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,” ver. 27.

The 28th verse is brought in proleptically to obviate the discouragements of any poor, convinced, and humbled soul, who might thus object: Lord, I am fully satisfied of the fulness of thy saving power, but greatly doubt whether ever I shall have the benefit thereof; for I see so much sin and guilt in myself, so great vileness and utter unworthiness, that I am over weighed, and even sink under the burden of it: My soul is discouraged because of sin. This objection is prevented in the words of my text, “ Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden,” q. d. Let not the sense of your sin and misery drive you from your only remedy: Be your sins never so many, and the sense and burden of them never so heavy, yet, for all that, *Come unto me*: You are the persons whom I invite and call. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In the words, three things are especially remarkable.

1. The soul's spiritual distress and burthen: *Wearry and heavy laden*.

2. Its invitation to Christ under that burthen: *Come unto me*.

3. Its encouragement to that great duty: *I will give you rest*.

First, The soul's spiritual distress and burthen expressed in two very emphatical words *, *οι κοπιωντες και πεφορτισμενοι* “ Ye that labour and are heavy laden.” The word which we translate *labour*, signifies a labouring even to faintness and tiring, to the consumption and waste of the spirits; and the other word signifies such a pressure by a burthen that is too heavy to be borne, that we do even sink down under it.

There is some difference among expositors about the quality of this burthen. Chrysostom, and some others after him, expound it of the burthen of the legal *rites* and *ceremonies*, which was a heavy burthen indeed, such as neither they, nor their fathers could bear. Under the task and burthen of these legal observances, they did sweat and toil to obtain a righteousness to justify them before God, and all in vain: and this is a pious sense: But others expound it of the burthen of sin in general; the corruption of na-

* *Οι κοπιωντες*, *i. e.* They who labour even to fainting and tiring, for this Greek word *το κοπιων* differs by this emphasis from the word *πονειν*, which signifies only in general to labour. *Piscator on the place*, explains it thus, Ye who feel the burden of your sins, and yet do not sink under the weight thereof. *Chrysostom* expounds it of those who are burdened with the legal rites and ceremonies; but we understand it in general, of all those who being pressed with the burden of their sins, and the sense of the malignity of their corrupt natures, do strive with all their might to throw off this depravity, and to obtain righteousness. *Musculus on the place*.

ture, and evils of practice, which souls are convinced have brought them under the curse, and will bring them to hell, and therefore labour and strive, all that in them lies, by repentance and reformation, to clear themselves from it; but all in vain, whilst they strive in their own strength. Such are they that are here called to come to Christ, which is the second thing; namely,

Secondly, The invitation of burthened souls to Christ: “Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden: Come unto me,” i. e. believe in me, lean and rest your burthened souls upon me. I am able to ease all your burthens; in me are that righteousness and peace which you seek in vain in all the legal rites and ceremonies; or in your repentance, reformations, and duties; but it will give you no ease, it will be no benefit to you, except you come unto me. Faith is often expressed under this notion, see John vi. 37. and John vii. 37. and it is to be further noted, that [all] burthened souls are invited to come, “All ye that labour.” Whatever your sin or guilt have been, whatever your fears or discouragements are, yet come, i. e. believe in me.

Thirdly, Here is the encouragement Christ gives to this duty, *And I will give you rest*: αναπαύσω μαζ. * I will refresh you, I will give you rest from your labour, your consciences shall be pacified, your hearts at rest and quiet in that pardon, peace and favour of God which I will procure for you by my death. But here it must be heedfully noted, that this promise of rest in Christ is not made to men simply as they are sinners, nor yet as they are burthened and heavy laden sinners, but as they come to Christ, i. e. as they are believers †. For let a man break his heart for sin, let him weep out his eyes, let him mourn as a dove, and shed as many tears for sin (if it were possible) as ever there fell drops of rain upon the ground, yet if he come not to Christ by faith, his repentance shall not save him, nor all his sorrows bring him to true rest. Hence note,

Doct. 1. *That some souls are heavy laden with the burthensome sense of sin.*

Doct. 2. *That all burthened souls are solemnly invited to come to Christ.*

Doct. 3. *That there is rest in Christ for all that come to him under the heavy burthen of sin.*

* Why doth thou seek that where thou canst not find it? I am he only that can help thee. *Mus. on the place.*

† The objects of the invitation are sinners, as such, to encourage and warrant them to believe. *Editor,*

Doct. 1. *Some souls are heavy laden with the burthensome sense of sin.*

I do not say all are so, for "fools make a mock at sin," Prov. xiv. 9. It is so far from being burthensome to some, that it is a *sport* to them, Prov. x. 23. But when a man's eyes are opened to see the evil that is in sin, and the eternal misery that follows it, (sin and hell being linked together with such strong chains as nothing but the blood of Christ can loose) then no burden is like that of sin: "A wounded conscience who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. For let us but consider the efficacy that the law of God hath upon the consciences of men, when it comes in the spirituality and power of it, to convince and humble the soul of a sinner. For then,

First, *The memory of sin long since committed, is refreshed and revived, as if it had been but yesterday:* There are fresh recognitions of sin long since acted and forgotten, as if they had never been: *What inward troubles for sin are.*

What was done in our youth is fetched back again, and by a new impression of fear and horror set home upon the trembling conscience, Job xiii. 26. "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth." Conscience can call back the days that are past, and draw up a new charge upon the score of old sins, Gen. xlii. 21. All that ever we did is recorded and entered into the book of conscience, and now is the time to open that book, when the Lord will convince and awaken sinners. We read in Job xiv. 17. of sealing up iniquities in a bag, which is an allusion to the *Clerk of the assizes*, that takes all the indictments that are made against persons at the *assizes*, and seals them up in a bag, in order to a trial. This is the first office and work of conscience; upon which

The *second*, namely, its *accusations*, do depend. These accusations of conscience are terrible things; who can stand before them? They are full, they are clear, and all of them referring to the approaching judgment of the great and terrible God.

Conscience dives into all sins*, secret as well as open, and into all the circumstances and aggravations of sin, as being committed against light, against mercy, against the strivings, warnings, and regrets of conscience. So that we may say of the efficacy of conscience, as it is said, Psal. xix. 6. of the influence of the *sun*, "nothing is hid from the heat and power thereof." "Come (saith the woman of Samaria) see a man that hath told me all that

* This is the first punishment of sin, that no guilty person can be acquitted in his own conscience. *Juv. lib. 13. l. 2.*

“ever I did,” John iv. 29. Christ convinced her but of one sin by his discourse, but conscience, by that one, fetched in, and charged all the rest upon her. And as the accusations of conscience are full, so they are clear and undeniable. A man becomes self-convinced, and there remains no shift, excuse, or plea, to defend himself. A thousand witnesses cannot prove any point more clearly than one testimony of conscience doth. Mat. xxii. 12. “The man was speechless, a mute; muzzled (as the word signifies *) by the clear testimony of his own conscience. These accusations are the second work of conscience, and they make way for the third, namely,

Thirdly, The *sentence and condemnation* of conscience: And truly this is an insupportable burthen: The condemnation of conscience is nothing else but its application of the condemning sentence of the law to a man’s person: The law curseth every one that transgresseth it, Gal. iii. 10. Conscience applies this curse to the guilty sinner. So that it sentences the sinner in God’s name and authority, from whence there is no appeal: The voice of conscience is the voice of God, and what it pronounces in God’s name and authority, he will confirm and ratify, 1 John iii. 20. “If our hearts, (i. e.) our consciences condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.” This is that torment which no man can endure. See the effects of it in Cain, in Judas, and in Spira; it is a real foretaste of hell-torments: This is that *worm that never dies*, Mark ix. 44. For look, as a worm in the body is bred of the corruption that is there, so the accusations and condemnations of conscience are bred in the soul by the corruption and guilt that are there. As the worm in the body preys and bites upon the tender, sensible, inward parts, so doth conscience touch the very quick. This is the third effect, or work, to sentence and condemn; and this also makes way for a fourth, namely,

Fourthly, *To upbraid and reproach the sinner under his misery*: and this makes a man a very *terror to himself*: To be pitied in misery is some relief, but to be upbraided and reproached, double our affliction. You know it was one of the aggravations of Christ’s sufferings to be reproached by the tongues of his enemies, whilst he hanged in torments upon the cursed tree; but all the scoffs and reproaches, the bitter jeers and *sarcasms* in the world, are nothing to those of a man’s own conscience, which will cut to the very bone.

O! when a man’s conscience shall say to him in a day of trouble, as Reuben to his afflicted brethren, Gen. xliii. 22. “Spake I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child, and ye would not

* Ο δὲ ἐζήμιωθη, et ille capistratus est.

“hear; therefore behold also his blood is required.” So conscience, did I not warn you, threaten you, persuade you in time against these evils, but you would not hearken to me, therefore behold now you must suffer to all eternity for it. The wrath of God is kindled against thy soul for it: This is the fruit of thy own wilful madness and obstinacy. Now thou shalt know the price of sinning against God, against light and conscience. O, this is terrible! Every bite of conscience makes a poor soul to startle, and in a terrible fright to cry, O the worm! O, the bitter foretaste of hell! A wounded spirit who can bear?

This is a fourth wound of conscience, and it makes way for a fifth; for here it is as the pouring out of the vials, and the sounding of those woe-trumpets in Revelations; one woe is past, and another cometh. After all these deadly blows of conscience upon the very heart of a sinner, comes another as dreadful as any that is yet named; and that is,

Fifthly, The fearful expectation of wrath to come, which it begets in the soul of a guilty sinner: Of this you read, Heb. x. 27. “A fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation.” And this makes the stoutest sinner faint and sink under the burthen of sin. For the tongue of man cannot declare what it is to lie down and rise with those fearful expectations. The case of such sinners is somewhat like that which is described in Deut. xxviii. 65, 66, 67. “The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have no assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, would to God it were even: And at even thou shalt say, would to God it were morning: For the fear of thine heart, wherewith thou shalt fear,” &c. Only in this it differs, in this scripture you have the terror of those described, whose temporal life hangs in doubtful suspense, but in the persons I am speaking of, it is a trembling under the apprehensions and expectations of the vengeance of eternal fire.

Believe it, friends, words cannot express what those poor creatures feel, that lie down, and rise up under these fears, and frights of conscience. Lord, what will become of me! I am free among the dead, yea, among the damned. I hang by the frail thread of a momentary life, which will, and must, break shortly, and may break the next moment, over the everlasting burnings: No pleasant bread is to be eaten in these days, but what is like the bread of condemned men.

And thus you see what the burden of sin is, when God makes it to bear upon the consciences of men, no burden of affliction is

like it: losses of dearest relations, sorrows for an only son, are not so pungent and penetrating as these: For,

First, No creature-enjoyment is pleasant under these inward troubles: In other troubles they may signify something to a man's relief; but here they are nothing; the wound is too deep to be healed by any thing but the blood of Jesus Christ; conscience requires as much to satisfy it, as God requires to satisfy him. When God is at peace with thee, (saith conscience) then will I be at peace with thee too; but, till then, expect no rest nor peace from me. All the pleasures and diversions in the world shall never stop my mouth: go where thou wilt, I will follow thee like thy shadow: be thy portion in the world as sweet as it will, I will drop in gall and wormwood into thy cup, that thou shalt taste no sweetness in any thing, till thou hast got thy pardon.

These inward troubles for sin alienate the mind from all former pleasures and delights; there is no more taste or savour in them, than in the white of an egg. Music is out of tune; all instruments jar and groan. Ornaments have no beauty; what heart hath a poor creature to deck that body, in which dwells such a miserable soul! to feed and pamper that carcase that hath been the soul's inducement to, and instrument in sin, and must be its companion in everlasting misery!

Secondly, These inward troubles for sin put a dread into death, beyond whatever the soul saw in it before. Now it looks like the *King of terrors* indeed. You read in Heb. ii. 15. of some that through fear of death are all their life long subject to bondage. O what a lively comment is a soul in this case able to make upon such a text! They would not scare at the pale horse, nor at him that sits on him, though his name be called *Death*, if it were not for what follows him, Rev. vi. 8. but when they consider that hell follows, they tremble at the very name or thoughts of death.

Thirdly, Such is the nature of these inward troubles of spirit, that they swallow up the sense of all outward troubles. Alas! these are all lost in the deeps of soul-sorrows, as the little rivulets are in the vast sea; he that is wounded at the heart will not cry *Oh*, at the bite of the smallest insect. And surely no greater is the proportion betwixt outward and inward sorrows. A small matter formerly would discompose a man, and put him into a fret; now ten thousand outward troubles are lighter than a feather: For, saith he, "why doth the living man complain?" Am I yet on this side of eternal burnings! O let me not complain then whatever my condition be. Have I losses in the world, or pains upon my body? Alas! these are not to be named with the loss of God, and the feeling of his wrath and indignation for evermore. Thus you see what troubles, inward troubles for sin be.

Secondly, If you ask, in the second place, how it comes to pass that any soul is supported under such strong troubles of spirit, that all that feel them do not sink under them; that all that go down into these deep waters of sorrow, are not drowned in them? The answer is,

How souls are supported under such troubles.

First, Though this be a very sad time with the soul (much like that of Adam, betwixt the breach of the first covenant, and the first promise of Christ made to him) yet the souls that are thus heavy laden, do not sink, because God hath a most tender care over them, and regard to them; underneath them are the everlasting arms, and thence it is they sink not: were they left to grapple with these troubles in their own strength, they could never stand. But God takes care of these mourners, that their spirits do not fail before him, and the souls that he hath made; I mean those of his elect, whom he is this way preparing for, and bringing unto Christ.

Secondly, The Lord is pleased to nourish still some hope in the soul under the greatest fears and troubles of spirit. Though it have no comfort or joy, yet it hath some *hope*, and that keeps up the heart. The afflicted soul doth, in this case, as the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 29. "He putteth his mouth in the dust, if yet there may be hope:" He saith, "It is good for a man to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God." There are usually some glimmerings or dawns of mercy through Christ, in the midnight darkness of inward troubles; *non dantur puræ tenabræ*. In hell, indeed, there is no hope to enlighten the darkness, but it is not so upon earth.

Thirdly, The experiences of others, who have been in the same deeps of trouble, are also of great use to keep up the soul above water. The experience of another is of great use to prop up a desponding mind, whilst as yet it hath none of its own; and, indeed, for the support of souls in such cases, they were recorded. 1 Tim. i. 16. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." For an encouraging * *Pattern*, an eminent precedent to all poor sinners that were to come after him, that none might absolutely despair of finding mercy through Christ. You know if a man be taken sick, and none can tell what the disease is, none can

* The word Ἰπποστυπώσεως as well as τυπός (which the word rendered Pattern in 1 Tim. i. 16.) signifies the first draught of a picture, it is here taken for example, that men might see what they might expect from God: That grace much more abounds, and is more powerful than sin, and that no believer may be diffident of the forgiveness provided for him. *Pol. Synops. on the place.*

say that ever they heard of such a disease before, it is exceeding frightful; but if one and another, it may be twenty, come to the sick man's bed-side, and tell him, sir, be not afraid, I have been in the very same case that you now are in, and so have many more, and all did well at last; why this is half a cure to the sick man. So it is here a great support to hear the experiences of other saints.

Fourthly, As the experiences of others support the soul under these burdens, so the riches of free grace through Jesus Christ uphold it. It is rich and abundant, Psal. cxxx. 7, 8. plenteous redemption; and it is free, and to the worst of sinners, Isa. i. 18. And under these troubles it finds itself in the way and proper method of mercy, for so my text (a text that hath upheld many thousand drooping hearts) states it. All this gives hope and encouragement under trouble.

Fifthly, and *lastly*, Though the state of the soul be sad and sinking, yet Jesus Christ usually makes haste in the extremity of trouble to relieve it by sweet and seasonable discoveries of his grace; *cum duplicantur lateris, venit* Moses*, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. It is with Christ as it was with Joseph, whose bowels yearned towards his brethren, and he was in pain till he had told them, "I am Joseph your brother." This is sweetly exhibited to us in that excellent parable of the prodigal, Luke xv. when his father saw him, being yet a great way off, he ran and fell upon his neck, and kissed him. Mercy runs nimbly to help, when souls are ready to fall under the pressure of sin. And thus you see both how they are burdened, and how upheld under the burden.

Why doth God make the burden of sin lie so heavy upon the souls of some sinners?

Thirdly, If it be enquired, in the last place, why God makes the burden of sin press so heavy upon the hearts of poor sinners? It is answered,

First, He doth it to divorce their hearts from sin, by giving them an experimental taste of the bitterness and evil that is in sin. Men's hearts are naturally glued with delight to their sinful courses; all the persuasions and arguments in the world are too weak to separate them from their beloved lusts. The morsels of sin go down smoothly and sweetly, they roll them with much delectation under their tongues, and it is but need that such bitter potions as these should be administered "to make their stomachs rise against sin," as that † word used by the apostle in 2 Cor. vii. 11. signifies, *in that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what indignation it wrought?* It notes the rising of the stomach with rage, a being angry even unto sickness; and this is the way,

* When the tale of bricks is doubled, Moses arrives.

† *Ἀγανάκτησις*, indignatio, stomachatio. Leigh's Critica, in verb.

the best and most effectual way to separate the soul of a sinner from his lusts; for, in these troubles, conscience saith, as it is in Jer. iv. 18. "Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is great, because it reacheth unto thy heart."

Secondly, The Lord doth this to make Jesus Christ most welcome and desirable to the soul. Christ is not *sweet* till sin be made *bitter* to us. Matth. ix. 12. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." If once God wounds the heart of a sinner, with the stinging sense of sin, then nothing in the world is so precious, so necessary, so vehemently desired and panted for as Jesus Christ! O that I had Christ, if I did go in rags, if I did feed upon no other food all my days, but the bread and water of affliction! This is the language of a soul filled with the sense of the evil of sin.

Thirdly, The Lord doth this to advance the riches of his free grace in the eyes of sinners. Grace never appears till sin appear to be sin. The deeper our sense of the evil of sin is, the deeper our apprehensions of the free grace of God in Christ will be. The louder our *groans* have been under the burden of sin, the louder will our *acclamations* and praises be for our salvation from it by Jesus Christ. "To me (saith Paul) the chiefest of sinners, was "this grace given," 1 Tim. i. 15. Never doth the grace of a prince so melt the heart of a traitor, as when trial, sentence, and all preparations for his execution have passed, before his unexpected pardon comes.

Fourthly, The Lord doth this to prevent relapses into sin: "In that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought!" 2 Cor. ii. 7. The burnt child dreads the fire, the bird that is delivered out of the *talons* of the *hawk*, trembles afterwards at the noise of his bells. "After such a deliverance as this, should we "again break thy commandments?" Ezra ix. 13, 14. Ask a poor penitent soul, that hath been in the deeps of sorrow for sin, Will you return to your former course of sin again? And it sounds in his ears, as if you should ask him, Will you run into the fire? Will you go to the rack again? O no, it hath cost him dear already*.

Fifthly, Lastly, This the Lord doth, to make them both skilful and compassionate in relieving others that are under like inward troubles. None can speak so judiciously, so pertinently, so feelingly to another's case, as he that hath been in the same case himself †;

* *Nolo tanti emere pœnitentiam.* i. e. I will not purchase repentance at so dear a rate.

† *Haud ignara mali, miseris succurere disco.* Virg.

Like you, an alien in a land unknown,

I learn to pity woes, so like mine own. Dryden.

this furnishes them with the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary soul; by this means they are able to “comfort others with the same comforts wherewith they themselves “have been comforted of God,” 2 Cor. i. 4.

Thus you have had a brief account, what the burden of sin is, how souls are supported under that burden, and why the Lord causes sin to lie so heavy upon the souls of some sinners. The improvement of all will be in a double use, viz.

Of information and direction.

First use for information.

Inference 1. Is there such a load and burden in sin? *What then was the burden that our Lord Jesus Christ felt and bare for us, upon whom the whole weight of all the sins of all God's elect lay!* Isa. liii. 6. “He hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on him.” Our burden is heavy, but nothing to Christ's. O there is a vast difference betwixt that which Christ bare, and that which we bear. We feel but the single weight of our own sins; Christ felt the whole weight of all our sins. You do not feel the whole weight that is in any one sin; alas, it would sink you, if God should let it bear in all its aggravations and effects upon you. Psal. cxxx. 2, 3. “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall “stand!” You would sink presently, you can no more stand under it, than under the weight of a mighty mountain. But Christ bare all the burden upon himself; his understanding was deep and large; he knew the extent of its evil, which we do not: we have many reliefs and helps under our burden, he had none; we have friends to counsel, comfort, and pity us; all his friends and familiars forsook him, and fled in the day of his trouble: we have comforts from heaven, he had frowns from heaven: “My “God, my God, (saith he in that doleful day) why hast thou forsaken me?” There is no comparison betwixt our load and Christ's.

Inf. 2. If there be such a burden in sin, *then certainly sinners will pay dear for all the pleasure they find in sin in the days of their vanity.* “What * one saith of crafty counsels, we may say of all ‘sins; though they seem pleasant in their first appearance, they “would be found sad in the event:” they are honey in the mouth, but the gall of asps in the belly; they tickle the fancy, but rend the conscience. O sinner, thy mirth will certainly be turned into mourning, as sure as thou livest; that vain and frothy breast of thine shall be wounded; thou shalt feel the sting and pain, as well as relish the sweet and pleasure of sin. O that thou wouldst but

* *Consilia callida prima specie læta; tractatu dura; eventu tristia.* Livy.

† Prov. xx. 7. Ibid. xxiii. 31, 32. Job xx. 12, 13, 14. James i. 15. Rom. vi. 21.

give thyself the leisure seriously to ponder those * scriptures in the margin; methinks they should have the same effect that the handwriting upon the plaister of the wall had upon that jovial king in the height of a frolic, Daniel v. 5. Reason thus with thine own heart, and thou wilt find the conclusion unavoidable; either I shall repent for sin, or I shall not: If I shall not, then must I howl under the wrath of God for sin, in the lowest hell for evermore. If I shall, then by what I have now read of the throbs and wounds of conscience, I see what this heart of mine, this vain heart of mine, must feel in this world. O how much wiser was the choice that Moses made, Heb. xi. 25. the worst of sufferings rather than the best of sin, the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season!

Inf. 3. Is there such a burden in sin, *then the most tender compassion is a debt due to souls afflicted and heavy laden with sin.* Their condition cries for pity, whatever their tongues do; they seem to call upon you, as Job upon his friends; "Have pity, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me, Job xix. 21. And O let all that have felt the wounds and anguish of an afflicted conscience themselves, learn from their own experience tenderly to pity and help others. Gal. vi. 1. "You that are spiritual, restore († or set him in joint again) in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself."

Israel was commanded to be kind to strangers, for, saith God, you know the heart of a stranger. And surely if any case in the world require help, pity, and all compassionate tenderness, this doth; and yet how do some slight spiritual troubles upon others? Parents slight them in their own children, masters in their servants; the more brutish and wicked they! O had you but felt yourselves what they feel, you would never treat them as you do. But let this comfort such poor creatures, Christ hath felt them, and will pity and help them; yea, he therefore would feel them himself, that he might have compassion upon you. If men will not, God will pity you; if men be so cruel to persecute him whom God hath smitten, God will be so kind to pour balm into the wounds that sin hath made: if they pull away the shoulder from you, and will not be concerned about your troubles, except it be to aggravate them, God will not serve you so: but certainly you that have passed through the same difficulties, you cannot be without compassion to them that are now grappling with them.

Inf. 4. *How inexpressibly dreadful is the state of the damned, who must bear the burden of all their sins upon themselves, without relief, or hope of deliverance!* Mark ix. 44. "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

* Prov. xx. 7. Ibid. xxiii. 51, 52. Job xx. 12, 13, 14. James i. 15. Rom. vi. 21.

† Καταστῆσαι, *luxata membra in suum locum restituere.*

O! If sin upon the soul that is coming to Christ for deliverance, be so burdensome, what is it upon the soul that is shut out from Christ, and all hopes of deliverance for ever! For, do but ponder these differences betwixt these two burdens.

First, No soul is so capacious now, to take in the fulness of the evil and misery of sin, as they are who are gone down to the place of torments. Even as the joys of God's face above are as much unknown to them that have the fore-tastes and first fruits of them here by faith, so the misery of the damned is much unknown, even to them that have in their consciences now, the bitterest taste and sense of sin in this world: as we have the visions of heaven, so we have the visions of hell also, but darkly through a glass.

Secondly, No burden of sin presseth so continually upon the soul here as it doth there. Afflicted souls, on earth, have intermissions, and breathing times; but in hell there are no lucid intervals, the wrath of God there is still flowing; it is in *fluxu continuo*, Isa. xxx. 33. a stream of brimstone.

Thirdly, No burden of sin lies upon any of God's elect so long as on the damned, who do, and must bear it: our troubles about sin are but short, though they should run parallel with the line of life; but the troubles of the damned are parallel with the endless line of eternity.

Fourthly, Under these troubles, the soul hath hope, but there, all hope is cut off: all the gospel is full of hope, it breathes nothing but hope to sinners that are moving Christ-ward under their troubles; but in hell the pangs of desperation rend their consciences for ever. So that, upon all accounts, the state of the damned is inexpressibly dreadful.

Inf. 5. If the burden of sin be so heavy, how sweet then must the pardon of sin be to a sin-burdened soul! Is it a refreshment to a prisoner to have his chains knocked off? A comfort to a debtor to have his debts paid, and obligations cancelled? What joy must it then be to a sin-burthened soul, to hear the voice of pardon and peace in his trembling conscience! Is the light of the morning pleasant to a man after a weary, tiresome night? the spring of the year pleasant after a hard and tedious winter? They are so indeed; but nothing so sweet as the favour, peace, and pardon of God, to a soul that hath been long restless, and anxious, under the terrors and fears of conscience. For, though after pardon and peace a man remembers sin still, yet it is as one that remembers the dangerous pits, and deep waters, from which he hath been wonderfully delivered, and had a narrow escape. O the inconceivable sweetness of a pardon! Who can read it without tears of joy? Are we glad when the grinding pain of the stone, or racking fits of the cholic are over? And shall we not be transported, when the accusations and

condemnations of conscience are over? Tongue cannot express what these things are; his joy is something that no words can convey to the understanding of another, that never felt the anguish of sin.

Inf. 6. Lastly, *In how sad a case are those that never felt any burden in sin, that never were kept waking and restless one night for sin?*

There is a *burdened* conscience, and there is a *benumbed* conscience. The first is more *painful*, but the last more *dangerous*. O it is a fearful blow of God upon a man's soul, to strike it senseless and stupid, so that though mountains of guilt lie upon it, it feels no pain or pressure: and this is so much more sad, because it incapacitates the soul for Christ, and is a presage and fore-runner of hell. It would grieve the heart of a man, to see a *delirious person* in the rage and height of a fever, to laugh at those that are weeping for him, call them fools, and telling them he is as well as any of them: much so is the case of many thousand souls; the God of mercy pity them.

Second use for counsel.

The only further use I shall make of this point here, shall be to direct and counsel souls that are weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin, in order to their obtaining true rest and peace. And first,

First counsel.

Satisfy not yourselves in fruitless complaints to men. Many do so, but they are never the nearer. I grant it is lawful in spiritual distresses to complain to men; yea, and it is a great mercy if we have any near us in times of trouble that are judicious, tender and faithful, into whose bosoms we may pour out our troubles; but to rest in this, short of Christ, is no better than a snare of the devil to destroy us. Is there not a god to go to in trouble? The best of men, in the neglect of Christ, are but physicians of no value. Be wise and wary in your choice of Christian friends, to whom you open your complaints; some are not clear themselves in the doctrine of Christ and faith, others are of a dark and troubled spirit, as you are, and will but entangle you more. "As for me (saith Job) is my complaint to man, and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?" Job xxi. 4. One hour betwixt Christ and thy soul in secret, will do more to thy true relief than all other counsellors and comforters in the world can do.

Second counsel.

Beware of a false peace, which is more dangerous than your trouble for sin can be. Many men are afraid of their troubles, but I think they have more cause to fear their peace a great deal. There is a twofold peace that ruins most men, peace in sin, and peace with sin: O how glad are some persons when their troubles are gone;

but I dare not rejoice with them. It is like him that rejoices his ague is gone, that it hath left him in a deep consumption. You are got rid of your troubles, but God knows how you have left them; your wounds are skinned over, better they were kept open. Surely they have much to answer for, that help on these delusions, healing the hurt of souls slightly, by crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. The false peace you beget in them, will be a real trouble to yourselves in the issue, Jer. vi. 14.

Third counsel.

Let all that are under inward troubles for sin, take heed of drawing desperate conclusions against themselves, and the final state of their own souls. Though your case be sad, it is not desperate; though the night be troublesome and tedious, keep on in the way to Christ, and light will spring up. To mourn for sin is your duty; to conclude there is no hope for you in Christ, is your sin. You have wronged God enough already, do not add a further and greater abuse to all the rest, by an absolute despair of mercy. It was your sin formerly to *presume beyond any promise*, it is your sin now to *despair against many commands*. I would say as the apostle in another case, I would not have you mourn as men that have no hope: your condition is sad as it is, but yet it is much better than once it was. You were once full of sin and void of sense, now you have the sense of sin, which is no small mercy. You were once quite out of the way and method of mercy, now you are in that very path wherein mercy meets the elect of God. Keep hope, therefore, at the bottom of all your troubles.

Fourth counsel.

Observe whether your troubles for sin produce such fruits and effects in your souls as theirs do, which end at last in Christ and everlasting peace.

First, One that is truly burdened with sin, will not allow himself to live in the secret practice of sin; either your trouble will put an end to your course of sinning, or your sinning will put an end to your troubles. Consult 2 Cor. vii. 11.

Secondly, True sorrow for sin, will give you very low and vile thoughts of yourselves; as you were covered with *pride* before, so you will be covered with *shame* after God hath convinced and humbled you, Rom. vi. 21.

Thirdly, A soul really burdened with sin will never stand in his own justification before God, nor extenuate and mince it in his confessions to him, Psal. li. 3, 4.

Fourthly, The burdens of sin will make a man set light by all other burdens of affliction, Lam. iii. 22. Micah vii. 9. The more you feel sin, the less you feel affliction.

Fifthly, A soul truly burdened for sin will take no hearty joy or

comfort in any outward enjoyment of this world, till Christ come and seek peace to the soul, Lam. iii. 28. Just so the soul sits alone and keepeth silence; merry company is a burden, and music is but howling to him.

Fifth counsel.

Beware of those things that make your troubles longer than they ought to be. There be several errors and mistakes that hold poor souls much longer in their fears and terrors than else they might be; and such are,

First, Ignorance of the nature of saving faith, and the necessity of it. Till you come to believe, you cannot have peace; and while you mistake the nature, or apprehend not the necessity of faith, you are not like to find that path of peace.

Secondly, Labouring to heal the wounds that the law hath made upon your consciences, by a more strict obedience to it for the future, in the neglect of Christ and his righteousness.

Thirdly, In observance of what God hath already done for you, in these preparatory works of the law, in order to your salvation by Jesus Christ. O! if you would but compare what you now are, with what you lately were, it would give some relief. But the last and principal thing is this:

Sixth counsel.

Hasten to Christ in the way of faith, and you shall find rest; and till then all the world cannot give you rest. The sooner you transact with Christ, in the way of faith, the sooner you shall be at peace and enter into his rest; for those that believe do now enter into rest. You may labour and strive, look this way and that, but all in vain; Christ and peace come together. No sooner do you come to him, and roll your burden on him, receive him as he offers himself, but the soul feels itself eased on a sudden; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God," Rom. v. 1. And thus in finishing the first, we are brought home to the second observation.

Doct. 2. That sin-burdened souls are solemnly invited to come to Christ.

This point sounds sweetly in the ear of a distressed sinner; it is the most joyful voice that ever the soul heard: the voice of blessing from mount Gerizim, the ravishing voice from mount Sion, "Ye are come to Jesus the Mediator." In opening of it I will shew,

1. What it is to come to Christ.
2. How Christ invites men to come to him.
3. Why his invitation is directed to burdened souls.

First, We will enquire what it is to come to Christ, and how many things are included in it.

In general, to come to Christ, is a phrase equipollent, or of the same amount with believing in Christ. It is an expression that carries the nature and necessity of faith in it, and is reciprocated with believing. John vi. 35. "He that cometh so me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." Coming to Christ, is believing in Christ; and believing in Christ, is coming to Christ; they are *synonyma's*, and import the self same thing. Only in this notion of faith, there are many rich and excellent things hinted to us, which no other word can so aptly convey to our minds. As,

First, It hints this to us, That the souls of convinced and burdened sinners do not only discern the *reality* of Christ, or that he is, but also the necessity of applying Christ, and that their eternal life is in their union with him: for this is most certain, that the object of faith must be determinate and fixed; the soul must believe that Christ is, or else there can be no emotions of the soul after him: all coming pre-supposes a fixed term to which we come, Heb. xi. 6. "He that cometh to God, must believe that God is." Take away this, and all motions after Christ presently stop. No wonder then that souls, in their first motions to Christ, find themselves clogged with so many atheistical temptations, shaking their assent to the truth of the gospel at the very root and foundation of it; but they that come to Christ, do see that *he is*, and that their life and happiness lie in their union with him, else they would never come to him upon such terms as they do.

Secondly, Coming to Christ implies the soul's despair of salvation any other way. The way of faith is a supernatural way, and souls will not attempt it until they have tried all natural ways to help and save themselves, and find it all in vain; therefore the text describes these *comers to Christ* as weary persons, that have been labouring and striving all other ways for rest, but can find none; and so are forced to relinquish all their fond expectations of salvation in any other way, and come to Christ as their last and only remedy.

Thirdly, Coming to Christ notes a supernatural and almighty power, acting the soul quite above its own natural abilities in this motion. John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except my Father which hath sent me draw him." It is as possible for the ponderous mountains to start from their bases and centres, mount themselves aloft into the air, and there fly like wandering atoms hither and thither, as it is for any man, of himself, i. e. by a pure natural power of his own, to come to Christ. It was not a stranger thing for Peter to come to Christ, walking upon the waves of the

sea, than for his, or any man's soul, to come to Christ in the way of faith.

Fourthly, Coming to Christ notes the voluntariness of the soul in its motion to Christ. It is true, there is no coming without the Father's drawing; but that drawing hath nothing of coaction in it; it doth not destroy, but powerfully, and with an overcoming sweetness, persuade the will. It is not forced or driven, *but it comes*; being made "willing in the day of God's power," Psal. cx. 3. Ask a poor distressed sinner in that season, Are you willing to come to Christ? O rather than live! life is not so necessary as Christ is! O! with all my heart, ten thousand worlds for Jesus Christ, if he could be purchased, were nothing answerable to his value in mine eyes! The soul's motion to Christ is free and voluntary, it is *coming*.

Fifthly, It implies this in it, That no duties, or ordinances, (which are but the ways and means by which we come to Christ), are, or ought to be central and terminative to the soul: i. e. the soul of a believer is not to sit down, and rest in them, but to come by them or through them to Jesus Christ, and take up his rest in him only. No duties, no reformatations, no ordinances of God, how excellent soever these things are in themselves, and how necessary soever they are in their proper place and use, can give rest to the weary and heavy laden soul: it cannot centre in any of them, and you may see it cannot, because it still gravitates and inclines to another thing, even Christ, and cannot terminate its motion till it be come to him. Christ is the term to which a believer moves; and therefore he cannot sit down by the way, or be as well satisfied as if he were at his journey's end. Ordinances and duties have the nature and use of means to bring us to Christ, but not to be to any man instead of Christ.

Sixthly, * Coming to Christ, implies an hope or expectation from Christ in the coming soul. If he hath no hope, why doth it move forward? As good sit still, and resolve to perish where it is, as to come to Christ, if there is no ground to expect salvation by him. Hope is the spring of motion and industry; if you cut off hope, you hinder faith: it cannot move to Christ, except it be satisfied, at least, of the possibility of mercy and salvation by him. Hence it is, that when comers to Christ are struggling with the doubts and fears of the issue, the Lord is pleased to enliven their faint hopes, by setting home such scriptures as these, John vi. 37. "He that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." And Heb. vii. 25. "He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto

* Come unto me, i. e. with the graces of faith, religious hope, and desire. *Draw-
gensis on the place.*

“God by him.” This puts life into hope, and hope puts life into industry and motion.

Seventhly, Coming to Christ for rest implies, that believers have, and lawfully may have an eye to their own happiness, in closing with the Lord Jesus Christ. The poor soul comes for rest; it comes for salvation; its eye and aim are upon it; and this aim of the soul at its own good, is legitimated, and allowed by that expression of Christ, John v. 40. “Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life.” If Christ blame them for not coming to him, that they might have life, sure he would not blame them, had they come to him for life.

Eighthly, but *Lastly*, and which is the principal thing in this expression; Coming to Christ, notes the all-sufficiency of Christ, to answer all the needs and wants of distressed souls, and their betaking themselves accordingly to him only for relief, being content to come to Christ for whatever they need, and live upon that fulness that is in him. If there were not an all-sufficiency in Christ, no soul would come to him; for this is the very ground upon which men come. Heb. vii. 25. “He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him:” *Εἰς τὸ πάντελες*, to the uttermost: In the greatest plunges, difficulties, and dangers. He hath a fulness of saving power in him, and this encourages souls to come unto him. One beggar uses not to wait at the door of another, but all at the doors of them they conceive able to relieve them. And as this notes the fulness of Christ as our Saviour, so it must needs note the emptiness and humility of the soul as a comer to him. This is called submission, in Rom. x. 3. Proud nature must be deeply distressed, humbled, and moulded into another temper, before it will be persuaded to live upon those terms, to come to Christ for every thing it wants, to live upon Christ’s fulness in the way of grace and favour, and have no stock of its own to live upon. O! this is hard, but it is the way of faith.

Secondly, In the next place, let us see how Christ invites men to come to him, and you shall find the means employed in this work, are either *internal*, and *principal*, namely, the Spirit of God, who is Christ’s vicegerent, and comes to us in his name and room, to persuade us to believe, John xv. 26; or *external*, namely, the preaching of the gospel by commissioned ambassadors, who, *in Christ’s stead, beseech men to be reconciled to God*, i. e. to come to Christ by faith, in order to their reconciliation and peace with God. But all means and instruments employed in this work of bringing men to Christ, entirely depend upon the blessing and concurrence of the Spirit of God, without whom they signify nothing. How long may ministers preach, before one soul comes to Christ, except the Spirit co-operate in that work! Now as to the manner in which

men are persuaded, and their wills wrought upon to come to Christ, I will briefly note several acts of the Spirit, in order thereunto.

First, There is an *illustrating work* of the Spirit upon the minds of sinners, opening their eyes to see their danger and misery; till these be discovered, no man stirs from his place: It is sense of danger that rouses the secure sinner, that distresses him, and makes him look about for deliverance, crying, *What shall I do to be saved?* And it is the discovery of Christ's ability to save, which is the ground and reason, (as was observed above,) of its motion to Christ. Hence, *seeing the Son*, is joined with believing, or *coming to him*, in John vi. 40.

Secondly, There is the *authoritative call*, or commanding voice of the Spirit in the word; a voice that is full of awful majesty and power. 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." This call of the Spirit to come to Christ, removes one great obstruction, namely, the fear of presumption out of the soul's way to Christ, and, instead of presumption in coming, makes it rebellion, and inexcusable obstinacy, to refuse to come. This answers all pleas against coming to Christ from our unworthiness and deep guilt; and mightily encourages the soul to come to Christ, whatever it hath been, or done.

Thirdly, There are soul-encouraging, *conditional* * *promises*, to all that do come to Christ in obedience to the command. Such is that in my text, *I will give you rest*: And that in John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." And these breathe life and encouragement into poor souls that fear, and are daunted through their own unworthiness.

Fourthly, There are *dreadful threatenings* denounced by the Spirit in the word, against all that refuse or neglect to come to Christ, which are of great use to engage and quicken souls in their way to Christ. Mark xvi. 16. "He that believes not shall be damned: Die in his sins," John viii. 14. "The wrath of God shall remain on him," John iii. ult. Which is as if the Lord had said, Sinners, do not dally with Christ, do not be always treating, and never concluding, or resolving: for if there be justice in heaven, or fire in hell, every soul that comes not to Christ, must, and shall perish to all eternity. Upon your own heads let the blood and destruction of your own souls be for ever, if you will not come unto him.

Fifthly, There are *moving examples* set before souls in the word, to prevail with them to come, alluring and encouraging examples of

* Promises which imply the connection of the end with the means. *Editor.*

such as have come to Christ, under the deepest guilt and discouragement, and yet found mercy. 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief: howbeit, (or nevertheless) for this cause I have obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting." Who would not come to Christ after such an example as this? And if this will not prevail, there are dreadful examples recorded in the word, setting before us the miserable condition of all such as refuse the calls of the word to come to Christ. 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. "By which also he went and preached to the spirits which are in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." The meaning is, the sinners that lived before the flood, but now are in hell, clapt up in that prison, had the offers of grace made them, but despised them, and now lie for their disobedience in prison, under the wrath of God for it, in the lowest hell.

Sixthly, and *lastly*, There is an effectual *persuading*, overcoming and victorious work of the Spirit upon the hearts and wills of sinners, under which they come to Jesus Christ. Of this I have spoken at large before, in the *fourth sermon*, and therefore shall not add any thing more here. This is the way and manner in which souls are prevailed with to come to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, In the last place, if you enquire why Christ makes his invitations to weary and heavy laden souls, and to no other, * the answer is briefly this :

First, Because in so doing, he follows the commission which he received from his Father: so you will find it runs, in Isa. lxi. 1. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. You see here how Christ's commission directs him: his Father sent him to poor broken-hearted sinners, and he will keep close to his commission. "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, (i. e. sensible burdened sinners) to repentance." Matth. ix. 13. "I am not sent (saith he,) but unto the lost sheep of the house of

* Though *weary* and *heavy laden* souls only, and in the issue, will believe; yet sinners, without exception, and as sinners, are the objects of the gospel-proclamation. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. Editor.

“Israel.” Thus his instructions and commission from the Father limit him only to sensible and burdened souls, and he will be faithful to his commission.

Secondly, The very order of the Spirit’s work in bringing men to Christ, shews us to whom the invitation and offers of grace in Christ are to be made. For none are convinced of righteousness, i. e. of complete and perfect righteousness, which is in Christ for their justification, until first they be convinced of sin; and, consequently, no man will, or can come to Christ by faith, till convictions of sin have awakened and distressed him, John xvi. 8, 9. This being the due order of the Spirit’s operation, the same order must be observed in gospel-offers and invitations.

Thirdly, It behoves that Christ should provide for his own glory, as well as for our safety; and not to expose one to secure the other; but save us in that way which will bring him most honour and praise. And certainly such a way as this, by first convincing, humbling, and burdening the souls of men, and then bringing them home to rest in himself.

Alas! let those that never saw, or felt the evil of sin, be told of rest, peace, and pardon in Christ, they will but despise it as a thing of no value, Luke v. 31. “The whole need not a physician, but those that are sick.” Bid a man that thinks himself sound and whole go to a physician, and he will but laugh at the motion; if you offer him the richest composition, he will refuse it, slight it, and it may be, spill it upon the ground. Ay, but if the same man did once feel an acute disease, and were made to sweat and groan under strong pains, if ever he come to know what sick days and restless nights are, and to apprehend his life to be in imminent hazard; then messengers are sent, one after another, in post-haste to the physician; then he begs him with tears to do what in him lies for his relief: he thankfully takes the bitterest potions, and praises the care and skill of his physician with tears of joy. And so the patient’s safety and the physician’s honour are both secured. So is it in this method of grace. The uses follow.

Infer. 1. If sin-burdened souls are solemnly invited to come to Christ, *Then it follows, that whatever guilt lies upon the conscience of a poor humbled sinner, it is no presumption, but his duty to come to Christ, notwithstanding his own apprehended vileness and great unworthiness.*

Let it be carefully observed, how happily that universal particle *all*, is inserted in Christ’s invitation, for the encouragement of sinners; “Come unto me, [all] ye that labour;” *q. d.* Let no broken-hearted sinner exclude himself, when he is not by me excluded from mercy: my grace is my own, I may bestow it where I will, and upon whom I will. It is not I, but Satan that impales and incloses my mercy from humbled souls that are made willing to

come unto me ; he calls that your presumption, which my invitation makes your duty.

Objec. 1. But I doubt my case is excepted by Christ himself, in Mat. xii. 31. where blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is exempted from pardon, and I have had many horrid blasphemous thoughts injected into my soul.

Sol. Art thou a burdened and heavy laden soul ? If so, thy case is not in that, or any other scripture exempted from mercy ; for the unpardonable sin is always found in an unrepentent heart : as that sin finds no pardon with God, so neither is it followed with contrition and sorrow in the soul that commits it.

Objec. 2. But if I am not guilty of that sin, I am certainly guilty of many great and heinous abominations of another kind, too great for me to expect mercy for ; and therefore I dare not go to Christ.

Sol. The greater your sins have been, the more need you have to go to Jesus Christ. Let not a *motive* to go to Christ be made an *obstacle* in your way to him. Great sinners are expressly called, Isa. i. 18. great sinners have come to Christ and found mercy, 1 Cor. vi. 7. and to conclude, it is an high reproach and dishonour to the blood of Christ, and mercy of God, which flows so freely through him, to object the greatness of sin to either of them. Certainly you have not sinned beyond the *extent of mercy*, or beyond the *efficacy of the blood of Christ* : but pardon and peace may be had, if you will thus come to Christ for it.

Objec. 3. Oh ! but it is now too late ; I have had many thousand calls by the gospel, and refused them ; many purposes in my heart to go to Christ, and quenched them ; my time therefore is past, and now it is to no purpose.

Sol. If the time of grace be past, and God intends no mercy for thee, how comes it to pass thy soul is now filled with trouble and distress for sin ? Is this the frame of a man's heart that is past hope. Do such signs as these appear in men that are hopeless ? Beside, the time of grace is a *secret* hid in the breast of God ; but coming to Christ is a *duty* plainly revealed in the *text* : And why will you object a thing that is secret and uncertain, against a duty that is so plain and evident ? Nor do you yourselves believe what you object ; for at the same time that you say your seasons are over, it is too late, you are, notwithstanding, found repenting, mourning, praying, and striving to come to Christ. Certainly, if you knew it were too late, you would not be found labouring in the use of means. Go on, therefore, and the Lord be with you. It is not presumption, but obedience, to come when Christ calls, as he here doth, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden."

Infer. 2. Hence it follows, *That none have cause to be troubled,*

when God makes the souls of their friends or relations sick with the sense of sin. It was the saying (as I remember) of Hieron to Sabinian, Nothing (said he) makes my heart sadder, than that nothing can make my heart sad. It is matter of joy to all that rightly understand the matter, when God smites the heart of any man with the painful sense of sin; of such sickness it may be said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." Yet how do many carnal relations lament and bewail this as a misery, as an undoing to their friends and acquaintances; as if then they must be reckoned lost, and never till then, that Christ is finding and saving them. O! if your hearts were spiritual and wise, their groans for sin would be as music in your ears. When they go alone to bewail their sin, you would go alone also to bless God for such a mercy, that ever you should live to such a happy day: You would say, Now is my friend in the blessed pangs of the new birth; now is he in the very way of mercy; never in so hopeful a condition as now. I had rather he should groan now at the feet of Christ, than groan hereafter under the wrath of God for ever. O! parents, beware, as you love the souls of your children, that you do not damp and discourage them, tempt or threaten them, divert or hinder them in such cases as this, lest you bring the blood of their souls upon your own heads.

Inf. 3. It also follows from hence, *That those to whom sin was never any burthen, are not yet come to Christ, nor have any interest in him.* We may as well suppose a child to be born without any pangs, as a soul to be born again, and united to Christ, without any sense or sorrow for sin. I know many have great *frights of conscience*, that never were made duly sensible of the evil of sin; many are afraid of *burning*, that never were afraid of *sinning*. Slight and transient troubles some have had, but they vanished like an early cloud, or morning dew. Few men are without checks and throbs of conscience at one time or other; but instead of going to the closet, they run to the *alehouse* or *tavern* for cure. If their sorrow for sin had been right, nothing but the sprinkling of the blood of Christ could have appeased their consciences, Heb. x. 22. How cold should the consideration of this thing strike to the hearts of such persons! Methinks, reader, if this be thy case, it should send thee away with an aking heart; thou hast not yet tasted the bitterness of sin, and if thou do not, thou shalt never taste the sweetness of Christ, his pardons and peace.

Inf. 4. *How great a mercy is it for sin-burthened souls to be within the sound and call of Christ in the gospel!*

There be many thousands in the Pagan and Popish parts of the world, that labour under distresses of conscience as well as we, but have no such reliefs, no such means of peace and comfort as we

have that live within the joyful sound of the gospel. If the conscience of a Papist be burdened with guilt, all the relief he hath, is to afflict his body to quiet his soul; a penance, or pilgrimage, is all the relief they have. If a Pagan be in trouble for sin, he hath no knowledge of Christ, nor notion of a satisfaction made by him; the voice of nature is, Shall I give my *first-born* for my *transgression*, the *fruit* of my *body* for the sin of my soul? The damned endure the terrible blows and wounds of conscience for sin, they roar under that terrible lash, but no voice of peace or pardon is heard among them. It is not, "Come unto me, ye that labour, and are heavy laden," but "depart from me, ye cursed."

Blessed are your ears, for you hear the voice of peace; you are come to Jesus the Mediator, and to the blood of sprinkling. O, you can never set a due value upon this privilege.

Inf. 5. How sweet and unspeakably relieving is the closing of a burthened soul with Jesus Christ, by faith! It is rest to the weary soul.

Soul-troubles are spending, wasting troubles; the pains of a distressed conscience are the most acute pains. A poor soul would fain be at rest, but knows not where; he tries this duty and that, but finds none. At last, in a way of believing, he casts himself, with his burden of guilt and fear, upon Christ, and there is the rest his soul desired. Christ and rest come together; till faith bring you to the bosom of Jesus, you can find no true rest: The soul is rolling and tossing, sick and weary, upon the billows of its own guilt and fears. Now the soul is come like a ship tossed with storms and tempests, out of a raging ocean into the quiet harbour! or like a *lost sheep* that hath been wandering in weariness, hunger, and danger, into the fold. Is a soft bed in a quiet chamber sweet to one that is spent and tired with travel? Is the sight of a shore sweet to the *shipwrecked mariner*, who looked for nothing but death? Much more sweet is Christ to a soul that comes to him pressed in conscience, and broken in spirit under the sinking weight of sin.

How did the Italians rejoice, after a long and dangerous voyage, to see Italy again! crying, with loud and united voices which made the very heavens ring again, * Italy! Italy! But no shore is so sweet to the weather-beaten passenger, as Christ is to a broken-hearted sinner: This brings the soul to a sweet repose. Heb. iv. 3. "We, which have believed, do enter into rest." And this endears the way of faith to their souls ever after.

Inf. 6. Learn hence the usefulness of the law to bring souls to Jesus Christ. It is utterly useless, as a covenant, to justify us; but exceeding useful to convince and humble us; it cannot relieve nor ease

* *Italiam, Italiam, læto clamore salutant.* Virg.

us, but it can and doth awaken and rouse us. It is a fair glass to shew us the face of sin, and till we have seen that we cannot see the face of Jesus Christ.

The law, like the *fiery serpent*, smites, stings, and torments the conscience; this drives us to the Lord Jesus, lifted up in the gospel, like the *brazen serpent* in the wilderness, to heal us. The use of the law is to make us feel our *sickness*; this makes us look out for a *Physician*: “I was alive once, without the law, (saith Paul) “but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died,” Rom. vii. 9. The hard, vain, proud hearts of men require such an hammer to break them to pieces.

Inf. 7. It is the immediate duty of weary and heavy-laden sinners to come to Christ by faith, and not stand off from Christ, or delay to accept him upon any terms whatsoever.

Christ invites and commands such to come unto him; it is therefore your sin to neglect, draw back, or defer whatever seeming reasons and pretences there may be to the contrary. When the *gaoler* was brought (where I suppose thee now to be) to a pinching distress, that made him cry, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The very next counsel the apostles gave him was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” Acts xvi. 30, 31. And, for your encouragement, know, that he who calleth you to come, knows your burden, what your sins have been and troubles are, yet he calls you: if your sin hinder not Christ from *calling*, neither should it hinder you from *coming*. He that calls you, is able to ease you, “to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him,” Heb. vii. 25. Whatever fulness of sin be in you, there is a greater fulness of saving power in Christ. Moreover, he that calls you to come, never yet rejected any poor burdened soul that came to him; and hath said he never will. John vi. 37. “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” Fear not, therefore, he will not begin with thee, or make thee the first instance and example of the feared rejection.

And, *Lastly*, Bethink thyself, what wilt thou do, and whither wilt thou go, in this case, if not to Jesus Christ? Nothing shall ease or relieve thee till thou dost come to him. Thou art under an happy necessity to go to him; with him only is found rest for the weary soul; which brings us to the third and last observation,

Doct. 3. *That there is rest in Christ, for all that come unto him, under the heavy burden of sin.*

Rest is a sweet word to a weary soul; all seek it, but none but believers find it. *We which have believed*, (saith the apostle) * *do*

* Non dicit εισήλθοντες, ingressi sumus, sed εισήγγασαμεθα, ingredimur, significans, initia quietis fideles nunc habere; plenam quietem suo tempore consecuturos. Pareus in loc.

enter into rest, Heb. iv. 3. “He doth not say, they *shall*, but they “do enter into rest; noting their spiritual rest to be already begun “by faith on earth in the tranquillity of conscience, and shall be “consummated in heaven, in the full enjoyment of God.” There is a sweet calm upon the troubled soul after believing, an ease, or rest of the mind, which is an unspeakable mercy to a poor weary soul. Christ is to it as the ark was to the dove, when she wandered over the watery world, and found no place to rest the sole of her foot. Faith centres the unquiet spirit of man in Christ, brings it to repose itself and its burden on him. It is the soul’s dropping anchor in a storm, which stays and settles it.

The great debate which cost so many anxious thoughts is now issued into this resolution; I will venture my all upon Christ, let him do with me as seemeth him good. It was impossible for the soul to find rest, whilst it knew not where to bestow itself, or how to be secured from the wrath to come; but when all is embarked in Christ for eternity, and the soul fully resolved to lean upon him, and to trust to him, now it feels the very *initials* of eternal rest in itself: it finds an heavy burden unloaded from its shoulders; it is come, as it were, into a new world; the case is strangely altered. The word *rest*, in this place, notes*, (and is so rendered by some) a *recreation*; it is restored, renewed, and re-created, as it were, by that sweet repose it hath upon Christ. Believers, know that faith is the sweetest recreation you can take. Others seek to divert and lose their troubles, by sinful recreations, vain company, and the like; but they little know what the recreation and sweet restoring rest that faith gives the soul is. You find, in Christ, what they seek in vain among the creatures. Believing is the highest recreation known in this world. But to prevent mistakes, three *Cautions* need to be premised, lest we do, *in ipso limine impingere*, stumble at the threshold, and so lose our way all along afterward.

Caution 1.

You are not to conceive, that all the soul’s fears, troubles and sorrows are presently over and at an end, as soon as it is come to Christ by faith. † They will have many troubles in the world after that, it may be, more than ever they had in their lives: “Our flesh “(saith Paul) had no rest,” 2 Cor. vii. 5. They will be infested with many temptations after that; that, it may be, the assaults of Satan may be more violent upon their souls than ever. *Horribilia*

* I will give you recreation from weariness, troubles and burdens. *Vatab. et Erasm.*

† Luther, upon his conversion, was so buffeted by Satan, that neither heat, blood, sensation, or speech remained.

de Deo, terribilia de fide: injections that make the very bones to quake, and the belly to tremble. They will not be wholly freed from sin; that rest remains for the people of God; nor from inward trouble and grief of soul about sin. These things are not to be expected presently.

Caution 2.

We may not think all believers do immediately enter into the full, actual sense of rest and comfort, but they presently enter into the state of rest. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,” Rom. v. 1. i. e. we enter into the state of peace immediately. “Peace is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart,” Psal. cxvii. 11. And he is a rich man that hath a thousand acres of corn in the ground, as well as he that hath so much in his barn, or the money in his purse. They have rest and peace in the seed of it, when they have it not in the fruit; they have rest in the promise, when they have it not in possession; and he is a rich man that hath good bonds and bills for a great sum of money, if he have not twelve-pence in his pocket. All believers have the promise, have rest and peace granted them under God’s own hand, in many promises which faith brings them under; and we know that the truth and faithfulness of God stands engaged to make good every line and word of the promise to them. So that though they have not a full and clear actual sense and feeling of rest, they are, nevertheless by faith come into the state of rest.

Caution 3.

We may not conceive that faith itself is the soul’s rest, but the means and instruments of it only. We cannot find rest in any work or duty of our own, but we may find it in Christ, whom faith apprehends for justification and salvation.

Having thus guarded the point against misapprehensions, by these needful cautions, I shall next shew you how our coming to Christ by faith brings us to rest in him. And here let it be considered what those things are that burden, grieve and disquiet the soul before its coming to Christ; and how it is relieved and eased in all those respects, by its coming to the Lord Jesus; and you shall find,

First, That one principal ground of trouble is the guilt of sin upon the conscience, of which I spake in the former point. The curse of the law lies heavy upon the soul, so heavy that nothing is found in all the world able to relieve it under that burden; as you see in a condemned man, spread a table in prison with the greatest dainties, and send for the rarest musicians, all will not charm his sorrow: but if you can produce an authentic pardon, you ease him presently. Just so it is here, faith plucks the thorn out of

the conscience, which so grieved it, unites the soul with Christ, and then that ground of trouble is removed: for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. The same moment the soul comes to Christ, it hath passed from death to life, is no more under the law, but grace. If a man's debt be paid by his surety, he need not fear to shew his face boldly abroad; he may freely meet the serjeant at the prison-door.

Secondly, The soul of a convinced sinner is exceedingly burdened with the uncleanness and filthiness wherewith sin hath defiled and polluted it. Conviction discovers the universal pollution of heart and life, so that a man loathes and abhors himself by reason thereof: if he do not look into his own corruptions, he cannot be safe; and if he do, he cannot bear the sight of them; he hath no quiet; nothing can give rest, but what gives relief against this evil; and this only is done by faith uniting the soul with Jesus Christ. For though it be true that the pollution of sin be not presently and perfectly taken away by coming to Christ, yet the burden thereof is exceedingly eased; for, upon our believing, there is an heart-purifying principle planted in the soul, which doth, by degrees, cleanse that fountain of corruption, and will at last perfectly free the soul from it. Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith;" and being once in Christ, he is concerned for the soul as a member now of his own mystical body, to purify and cleanse it, that at last he may present it perfect to the Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 26. The reigning power of it is gone immediately upon believing, and the very existence and being of it shall at last be destroyed. O, what rest must this give under those troubles for sin:

Thirdly, It was an intolerable burden to the soul to be under the continual fears, alarms, and frights of death and damnation; its life hath been a life of bondage, upon this account, ever since the Lord opened his eyes to see his condition. Poor souls lie down with tremblings, for fear what a night may bring forth. It is a sad life indeed to live in continual bondage of such fears; but faith sweetly relieves the trembling conscience, by removing the guilt which breeds its fears. The sting of death is sin. When guilt is removed, fears vanquish. "Smite, Lord, smite, said Luther, "for my sins are forgiven*." Now, if sickness come, it is another thing than it was wont to be. Isa. xxxiii. 24. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be "forgiven their iniquities." A man scarce feels his sickness, in comparison to what he did, whilst he was without Christ and hope of pardon.

* *Feri, Domine, feri, nam a peccatis meis absolutus sum.* Luther.

Fourthly, A convinced sinner, out of Christ, sees every thing against him; nothing yields any comfort, yea, every thing increases and aggravates his burden, when he looks to things past, present, or to come. If he reflect upon things past, his soul is filled with anguish, to remember the sins committed and the seasons neglected, and the precious mercies that have been abused; if he look upon things present, the case is doleful and miserable; nothing but trouble and danger, Christless and comfortless; and if he look forward to things to come, that gives him a deeper cut to the heart than any thing else; for though it be sad and miserable for the present, yet he fears it will be much worse hereafter; all these are but the beginning of sorrows. And thus the poor, awakened sinner becomes a *Magor Missabib*; fear round about.

But, upon his coming to Christ, all things are marvellously altered; a quite contrary face of things appears to him; every thing gives him hope and comfort, which way soever he looks. So speaks the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All things are yours, (saith he) whether life or death, or things present, or things to come; all is yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's:" They are ours, i. e. for our advantage, benefit, and comfort. More particularly upon our coming to Christ,

First, Things past are ours, they conduce to our advantage and comfort. Now the soul can begin to read the gracious end and design of God, in all its preservations and deliverances; whereby it hath been reserved for such a day as this. O! it melts his heart to consider his companions in sin and vanity are cut off, and he spared; and that for a day of such mercy, as the day of his espousals with Christ is. Now all his past sorrows, and deep troubles of spirit, which God hath exercised him with, begin to appear the greatest mercies that ever he received; being all necessary and introductive to this blessed union with Christ.

Secondly, Things present are ours, though it be not yet with us as we would have it; Christ is not sure enough, the heart is not pure enough; sin is too strong, and grace is too weak; many things are yet out of order; yet can the soul bless God for this, with tears of joy and praise, being full of admiration and holy astonishment, that it is as it is; and that he is where he is, though he be not yet where he would be. O! it is a blessed life to live as a poor recumbent, by acts of trust and affiance, though, as yet, he have but little evidence; that he is resolved to trust all with Christ, though he be not yet certain of the issue. O this it a comfortable station, a sweet condition to what it was, either when the soul wallowed in sin, in the days before conviction, or was swallowed up in fears and troubles for sin after conviction; now it hath hope, though it want assurance: and hope is sweet to a soul coming out of such

deep distresses. Now it sees the remedy, and is applying it; whereas before the wound seemed desperate. Now all hesitations and debates are at an end in the soul; it is no longer unresolved what to do; all things have been deeply considered, and after consideration, issued into this resolve, or decree of the will: I will go to Christ; I will venture all upon his command and call; I will embark my eternal interests in that bottom; here I fix, and here I resolve to live and die. O! how much better is this than that floating life it lived before, rolling upon the billows of inward fears and troubles, not able to drop anchor any where, nor knowing where to find an harbour?

Thirdly, *Things to come are ours*; and this is the best and sweetest of all: Man is a prospecting creature, his eye is much upon things to come, and it will not satisfy him that it is well at present, except he have a prospect that it shall be so hereafter. But now the soul hath committed itself and all its concernments to Christ for eternity, and this being done, it is greatly relieved against evils to come.

I cannot (saith the believer) think all my troubles over, and that I shall never meet any more afflictions; it were a fond vanity to dream of that: but I leave all these things where I have left my soul: he that hath supported me under inward, will carry me through outward troubles also. I cannot think all my *temptations* to sin past; O! I may yet meet with sore assaults from Satan, yet it is infinitely better to be watching, praying, and striving against sin, than it was when I was obeying it in the lusts of it. God, that hath delivered me from the love of sin, will, I trust, preserve me from ruin by sin. I know also death is to come; I must feel the pangs and agonies of it: but yet the aspect of death is much more pleasant than it was. I come, Lord Jesus to thee, who art the death of death, whose death hath disarmed death of its sting: for I fear not its dart if I feel not its sting. And thus you see briefly, how by faith believers enter into rest; how Christ gives rest, even at present, to them that come to him, and all this but as a beginning of their everlasting rest.

Inference 1. Is there rest in Christ for weary souls that come unto him? *Then, certainly it is a design of Satan against the peace and welfare of men's souls, to discourage them from coming to Christ in the way of faith.*

He is a restless spirit himself, and would make us so too; it is an excellent note of * Minutius Felix, "Those desperate and restless spirits (saith he) have no other peace but in bringing us to the same misery themselves are in:" He goeth about as a roar-

* *Ad solamen calamitatis suæ, non desinunt perditæ perdere.* Minut. Felix.

ing lion, seeking whom he may devour. It frets and grates his proud and envious mind, to see others find rest when he can find none; an effectual plaister applied to heal our wound, when his own must bleed to eternity: And he obtains his end fully, if he can but keep off souls from Christ. Look therefore, upon all those objections and discouragements raised in your hearts against coming to Christ, as so many artifices and cunning devices of the devil, to destroy and ruin your souls. It is true they have a very specious and colourable appearance; they are gilded over with pretences of the justice of God, the heinous nature of sin, the want of due and befitting qualifications for so holy and pure a God, the lapsing of the season of mercy, and an hundred others of like nature: but I beseech you, lay down this as a sure conclusion, and hold it fast; that whatever it be that discourages and hinders you from coming to Christ, is directly against the interest of your souls, and the hand of the devil is certainly in it.

Inf. 2. Hence also it follows, *that unbelief is the true reason of all that disquietness and trouble, by which the minds of poor sinners are so racked and tortured.*

If you will not believe, you cannot be established; till you come to Christ, peace cannot come to you: Christ and peace are undivided. Good souls, consider this; you have tried all other ways, you have tried duties, and no rest comes; you have tried reformation, restitution, and a stricter course of life; yet your wounds are still open, and fresh bleeding: these things, I grant, are in their places both good and necessary; but, of themselves, without Christ, utterly insufficient to give what you expect from them: why will you not try the way of faith? Why will you not carry your burthen to Christ? O! that you would be persuaded to it, how soon would you find what so long you have been seeking in vain! How long will you thus oppose your own good? How long will you keep yourselves upon the rack of conscience? Is it easy to go under the throbs and wounds of an accusing and condemning conscience? You know it is not: you look for peace, but no good comes; for a time of healing, and behold trouble. Alas! it must and will be so still, until you are in the way of faith, which is the true and only method to obtain rest.

Inf. 3. *What cause have we all to admire the goodness of God, in providing for us a Christ, in whom we may find rest to our souls!*

How hath the Lord filled and furnished Jesus Christ with all that is suitable to a believer's wants! Doth the guilt of sin terrify his conscience? Lo, in him is perfect righteousness to remove that guilt, so that it shall neither be imputed to his person, nor reflected by his conscience, in the way of condemnation as it was before. In him also is a fountain opened, for washing and for cleansing the

filth of sin from our souls; in him is the fulness both of *merit*, and of *spirit*, two sweet springs of peace to the souls of men: well might the apostle say, "Christ the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 30. and well might the Church say, "He is altogether lovely," Cant. v. 16. Had not God provided Jesus Christ for us, we had never known one hour's rest to all eternity.

Inf. 4. How unreasonable, and wholly inexcusable, in believers, is the sin of backsliding from Christ! Have you found rest in him, when you could not find it in any other! Did he receive, and ease your souls, when all other persons and things were physicians of no value? And will you, after this, backslide from him again? O what madness is this! "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of the field? Or shall the cold, flowing waters, that come from another place, be forsaken?" No man that is in his wits would leave the pure, cold, refreshing stream of a crystal fountain, to go to a filthy puddle, lake, or an empty cistern; such the best enjoyments of this world are, in comparison with Jesus Christ.

That was a melting expostulation of Christ's with the disciples, John vi. 67, 68. when some had forsaken him, "Will ye also go away?" And it was a very suitable return they made, Lord, whither away from thee should we go! q. d. From thee, Lord! No, where can we mend ourselves? be sure of it, whenever you go from Christ, you go from rest to trouble. Had Judas rest? Had Spira rest? and do you think you shall have rest? No, no, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways," Prov. xiv. 14. "Cursed be the man that departeth from him, he shall be as the heath in the desert, that seeth not when good cometh, and shall inhabit the parched places of the wilderness," Jer. xvii. 5. If fear of sufferings, and worldly temptations, ever draw you off from Christ, you may come to those straits and terrors of conscience that will make you wish yourselves back again with Christ in a prison, with Christ at a stake.

Infer. 5. Let all that come to Christ learn to improve him to the rest and peace of their own souls, in the midst of all the troubles and outward distresses they meet with in the world.

Surely rest may be found in Christ in any condition; he is able to give you peace in the midst of all your troubles here. So he tells you in John xvi. 33. "These things have I spoken to you, that in me you might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation." By peace he means not a deliverance from troubles, by taking off affliction from them, or taking them away by death from all afflictions; but it is something they enjoy from Christ in the very midst of troubles, and amidst all their afflictions, that quiets and gives them rest, so that troubles cannot hurt them. Certainly,

believers, you have peace in Christ, when there is little in your own hearts; and your hearts might be filled with peace too, if you would exercise faith upon Christ for that end. It is your own fault if you be without rest in any condition in this world. Set yourselves to study the *fulness* of Christ, and to clear your *interest* in him; believe what the scriptures reveal of him, and live as you believe, and you will quickly find the peace of God filling your hearts and minds.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON X.

Wherein the general Exhortation is enforced by one Motive drawn from the first Title of CHRIST.

MATTH. ix. 12.

But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

HAVING opened, in the former discourses, the *nature* and *method* of the *application* of Christ to sinners; it remains now that I press it upon every soul, as it expects peace and pardon from God, to *apply* and *put on Jesus Christ*, i. e. to get union with him by faith, whilst he is yet held forth in the free and gracious tenders of the gospel. To which purpose I shall now labour in this general *use of exhortation*, in which my last subject engaged me; wherein divers arguments will be further urged, both from

1. The titles, and
2. The privileges of Jesus Christ.

The titles of Christ are so many motives or arguments fitted to persuade men to come unto him. Amongst which, *Christ, as the Physician of souls*, comes under our first consideration, in the text before us.

The occasion of these words of Christ, was the call of Matthew the publican, who, having first opened his heart, next opened his house to Christ, and entertains him there. This strange and unexpected change, wrought upon Matthew, quickly brings in all the neighbourhood, and many publicans and sinners resorted thither; at which the stomachs of the proud Pharisees began to swell. From this occasion they took offence at Christ, and, in this verse, Christ takes off the offence, by such an answer as was fitted both for their *conviction* and his own *vindication*. But when Jesus