

the seventh discourse to a treatise by

**JOHN BUNYAN**

entitled

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

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

Introduction Compiled & Edited by  
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Scammon Bay, Alaska  
December 2007

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



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

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

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

## **Bunyan's 7<sup>th</sup> Discourse:**

### **THE USE AND APPLICATION**

SEVENTHLY, Having thus spoken to these objections, let us now come to make some use of the whole. And,

Use *First*. I would exhort the children to consider the dignity that God hath put upon Jesus Christ their Saviour; for by how much God hath called his Son to offices and places of trust, by so much he hath heaped dignities upon him. It is said of Mordecai, that he was next to the king Ahasuerus. And what then? Why, then the greatness of Mordecai, and his high advance, must be written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia, to the end his fame

might not be buried nor forgotten, but remembered and talked of in generations to come (Esther 10:1-3). Why, my brethren, God exalted Jesus of Nazareth, hath made him the only great one, having given him a name above every name— a name, did I say?— a name and glory beyond all names, and above all names, as doth witness both his being set above all, and the many offices which he executeth for God on behalf of his people. It is counted no little addition to honour when men are not only made near to the king, but also entrusted with most, if not almost with all the most weighty affairs of the kingdom. Why, this is the dignity of Christ; he is, it is true, the natural Son of God, and so high, and one that abounds with honour. But this is not all; God has conferred upon him, as man, all the most mighty honours of heaven; he hath made him Lord Mediator betwixt him and the world. This in general. And particularly, he hath called him to be his High Priest for ever, and hath sworn he shall not be changed for another (Hebrews 7:21-24). He hath accepted of his offering once for ever, counting that there is wholly enough in what he did once “to perfect for ever them that are sanctified”; to wit, set apart to glory (Hebrews 10:11-14).

He is Captain-general of all the forces that God hath in heaven and earth, the King and Commander of his people (Hebrews 10:9, 25-28). He is Lord of all, and made “head over all things to the church,” and is our Advocate with the Father (Ephesians 1:22). O, the exaltation of Jesus Christ! Let Christians, therefore, in the first place, consider this. Nor can it be but profitable to them, if withal they consider that all this trust and honour is put and conferred upon him in relation to the advantage and advancement of Christians. If Christians do but consider the nearness that is betwixt Christ and them, and, withal, consider how he is exalted, it must needs be matter of comfort to them. He is my flesh and my bone that is exalted; he is my friend and brother that is thus set up and preferred. It was something to the Jews when Mordecai was exalted to honour; they had, thereby, ground to rejoice and be glad, for that one of themselves was made lord-chief by the king, and the great governor of the land, for the good of his kindred. True, when a man thinks of Christ as severed from him, he sees but little to his comfort in Christ’s exaltation; but when he looks upon Christ, and can say, My Saviour, my Priest, or the chief Bishop of my soul, then he will see much in his being thus promoted to honour. Consider, then, of the glories to which God has exalted our Saviour, in that he hath made him so high. It is comely, also, when thou speakest of him, that thou name his name with some additional title, thereby to call thy mind to the remembrance, and so to the greater reverence of the person of thy Jesus; as, our Lord Jesus, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (2 Peter 2:20; Hebrews 3:1; &c.). Men write themselves by their titles; as, John, earl of such a place, Anthony, earl of such a place, Thomas, lord, &c. It is common, also, to call men in great places by their titles rather than by their names; yea, it also pleaseth such great ones well; as, My lord high chancellor of England, My lord privy seal, My lord high admiral, &c. And thus should Christians make mention of Jesus Christ our Lord, adding to his name some of his titles of honour; especially since all places of trust and titles of honour conferred on him are of special favour to us. I did use to be much taken with one sect of Christians; for that it was usually their way, when they made mention of the name of Jesus, to call him “The blessed King of Glory.” Christians should do thus; it would do them good; for why doth the Holy Ghost, think you, give him all these titles but that we should call him by them, and so make mention of him one to another; for the very calling of him by this or that title, or name, belonging to this or that office of his, giveth us occasion, not only to think of him as exercising that office, but to inquire, by the Word, by meditation, and one of another, what there

is in that office and what, by his exercising of that, the Lord Jesus profiteth his church.

How will men stand for that honour that, by superiors, is given to them, expecting and using all things; to wit, actions and carriages, so as that thereby their grandeur may be maintained; and saith Christ, “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (John 13:13). Christ Jesus our Lord would have us exercise ourselves in the knowledge of his glorious offices and relative titles, because of the advantage that we get by the knowledge of them, and the reverence of, and love to him that they beget in our hearts. “That disciple,” saith the text, “whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him (for he was naked), and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship”: to wit, to shore, to wait upon their Lord (John 21). The very naming of him under the title of Lord, bowed their hearts forthwith to come with joint readiness to wait upon him. Let this also teach us to distinguish Christ’s offices and titles, not to confound them, for he exerciseth those offices, and beareth those titles, for great reason, and to our commodity.

Every circumstance relating both to Christ’s humiliation and exaltation ought to be duly weighed by us, because of that mystery of God, and of man’s redemption that is wrapped therein; for as there was not a pin, nor a loop, nor a tack in the tabernacle but had in it use of instruction to the children of Israel, so there is not any part, whether more near or more remote to Christ’s suffering and exaltation, but is, could we get into it, full of spiritual advantage to us.

To instance the water that came out of Christ’s side, a thing little taken notice of either by preachers or hearers, and yet John makes it one of the witnesses of the truth of our redemption, and a confirmation of the certainty of that record that God, to the world, hath given of the sufficiency that is in his Son to save (John 19:34; 1 John 3:5-9; 4:9-12; 5:5-9).

When I have considered that the very timing of Scripture expressions, and the season of administering ordinances, have been argumentative to the promoting of the faith and way of justification by Christ, it has made think that both myself and most of the people of God look over the Scriptures too slightly, and take too little notice of that or of those many honours that God, for our good, has conferred upon Christ. Shall he be called a King, a Priest, a Prophet, a Sacrifice, an Altar, a Captain, a Head, a Husband, a Father, a Fountain, a Door, a Rock, a Lion, a Saviour, &c., and shall we not consider these things? And shall God to all these add, moreover, that he is an Advocate, and shall we take no notice thereof, or jumble things so together, that we lose some of his titles and offices; or so be concerned with one as not to think we have need of the benefit of the rest? Let us be ashamed thus to do or think, and let us give to him that is thus exalted the glory due unto his name.

Use *Second*. As we should consider the titles and offices of Christ in general, so we should consider this of his being an Advocate in particular; for this is one of the reasons which induced the apostle to present him here under that very notion to us—namely, that we should have faith about it, and consider of it to our comfort—“If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” “An advocate”—an advocate, as I said, is one that hath power to plead for another in this, or that, or any court of judicature. Be much therefore in the meditation of Christ, as executing of this his office for thee, for many advantages will come to

thee thereby. As,

1. This will give thee to see that thou art not forsaken when thou hast sinned; and this has not in it a little relief only, but yieldeth consolation in time of need. There is nothing that we are more prone unto than to think we are forsaken when we have sinned, when for this very thing—to wit, to keep us from thinking so, is the Lord Jesus become our Advocate—“If any man sin, we have an Advocate.” Christian, thou that hast sinned, and that with the guilt of thy sin art driven to the brink of hell, I bring thee news from God—thou shalt not die, but live, for thou hast “an Advocate with the Father.” Let this therefore be considered by thee, because it yieldeth this fruit.

2. The study of this truth will give thee ground to take courage to contend with the devil concerning the largeness of grace by faith, since thy Advocate is contending for thee against him at the bar of God. It is a great encouragement for a man to hold up his head in the country, when he knows he has a special friend at court. Why, our Advocate is a friend at court, a friend there ready to give the onset to Satan, come he when he will. “We have an Advocate with the Father”; an Advocate, or one to plead against Satan for us.

3. This consideration will yield relief, when, by Satan’s abuse of some other of the offices of Christ, thy faith is discouraged and made afraid. Christ as a prophet pronounces many a dreadful sentence against sin; and Christ as a king is of power to execute them; and Satan as an enemy has subtlety enough to abuse both these, to the almost utter overthrow of the faith of the children of God. But what will he do with him as he is an Advocate? Will he urge that he will plead against us? He cannot; he has no such office. “Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength into me” (Job 23:6). Wherefore Satan doth all he may to keep thee ignorant of this office; for he knows that as Advocate, when he is so apprehended, the saints are greatly relieved by him, even by a believing thought of that office.

4. This consideration, or the consideration of Christ as exercising of this office, will help thee to put by that visor wherewith Christ by Satan is misrepresented to thee, to the weakening and affrighting of thee. There is nothing more common among saints than thus to be wronged by Satan; for as he will labour to fetch fire out of the offices of Christ to burn us, so to present him to us with so dreadful and so ireful a countenance, that a man in temptation, and under guilt, shall hardly be able to lift up his face to God. But now, to think really that he is my Advocate, this heals all! Put a visor upon the face of a father, and it may perhaps for a while fright the child; but let the father speak, let him speak in his own fatherly dialect to the child, and the visor is gone, if not from the father’s face, yet from the child’s mind; yea, the child, notwithstanding that visor, will adventure to creep into its father’s bosom. Why, thus it is with the saints when Satan deludes and abuses them by disfiguring the countenance of Christ to their view. Let them but hear their Lord speak in his own natural dialect (and then he doth so indeed when we hear him speak as an Advocate), and their minds are calmed, their thoughts settled, their guilt made to vanish, and their faith to revive.

Indeed, the advocateship of Jesus Christ is not much mentioned in the Word, and because it is no oftener made mention of, therefore perhaps it is that some Christians do so lightly pass it over; when, on the contrary, the rarity of the thing should make it the more admirable; and perhaps it is

therefore so little made mention of in the Bible, because it should not by the common sort be abused, but is as it were privately dropped in a corner, to be found by them that are for finding relief for their soul by a diligent search of the Scriptures; for Christ in this office of advocateship is only designed for the child of God, the world hath nothing therewith to do. Methinks that which alone is proper to saints, and that which by God is peculiarly designed for them, they should be mightily taken withal; the peculiar treasure of kings, the peculiar privilege of saints, oh, this should be affecting to us!— why, Christ, as an Advocate, is such. “Remember me, O Lord,” said the Psalmist, “with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance” (Psalm 106:4-5). The Psalmist, you see here, is crying out for a share in, and the knowledge of, the peculiar treasure of saints; and this of Christ as Advocate is such; wherefore study it, and prize it so much the more, this Advocate is ours.

(1.) Study it with reference to its peculiarity. It is for the children, and nobody else; for the children, little and great. This is children’s bread; this is a mess for Benjamin; this is to be eaten in the holy place. Children use to make much of that which, by way of specialty, is by their relations bestowed on them— “And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to thee” (1 Kings 21:3). No, truly will I not. Why so? Because it was my father’s gift, not in common to all, but to me in special.

(2.) Study this office in the nature of it; for therein lies the excellency of anything, even in the nature of it. Wrong thoughts of this or that abuses it, and takes its natural glory from it. Take heed, therefore, of misapprehending, while thou art seeking to apprehend Christ as thy Advocate. Men judge of Christ’s offices while they are at too great a distance from them; but “let them come near,” says God, “then let them speak” (Isaiah 41:1); or as Elihu said to his friends, when he had seen them judge amiss, “Let us choose to us judgment, let us know among ourselves what is good” (Job 34:4). So say I; study to know, rightly to know, the Advocate-office of Jesus Christ. It is one of the easiest things in the world to miss of the nature, while we speak of the name and offices of Jesus Christ; wherefore look to it, that thou study the nature of the office of his advocateship, of his advocateship for, for so you ought to consider it. There is an Advocate for, not against, the children of God— “Jesus Christ the righteous.”

(3.) Study this office with reference to its efficacy and prevalency. Job says, “After my words, they spake not again” (Job 29:22). And when Christ stands up to plead, all must keep silence before him. True, Satan had the first word, but Christ the last, in the business of Joshua, and such a last as brought the poor man off well, though “clothed with filthy garments” (Zechariah 3:1-10). Satan must be speechless after a plea of our Advocate, how rampant soever he is afore; or as Elihu has it, “They were amazed; they answered no more; they left off speaking.” Shall he that speaks in righteousness give place, and he who has nothing but envy and deceit be admitted to stand his ground? Behold, the angels cover their faces when they speak of his glory, how then shall not Satan bend before him? In the days of his humiliation, he made him cringe and creep, how much more, then, now he is exalted to glory, to glory to be an Advocate, an Advocate for his people! “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

(4.) Study the faithfulness of Christ in his execution of this office, for he will not fail nor forsake them that have entertained him for their Advocate: “He will thoroughly plead their cause”

(Jeremiah 50:34). Faithful and true, is one of his titles; and you shall be faithfully served by him; you may boldly commit your cause unto him, nor shall the badness of it make him fail, or discourage him in his work; for it is not the badness of a cause that can hinder him from prevailing, because he hath wherewith to answer for all thy sins, and a new law to plead by, through which he will make thee a conqueror. He is also for sticking to a man to the end, if he once engages for him (John 13:1-2). He will threaten and love, he will chastise and love, he will kill and love, and thou shalt find it so. And he will make this appear at the last; and Satan knows it is so now, for he finds the power of his repulses while he pleadeth for him at the bar against him. And all this is in very faithfulness.

(5.) Study also the need that thou hast of a share in the execution of the advocateship of Jesus Christ. Christians find that they have need of washing in the blood of Christ, and that they have need of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ; they also find that they have need that Christ should make intercession for them, and that by him, of necessity, they must approach God, and present their prayers and services to him; but they do not so well see that they need that Christ should also be their Advocate. And the reason thereof is this: they forget that their adversary makes it his business to accuse them before the throne of God; they consider not the long scrolls and many crimes wherewith he chargeth them in the presence of the angels of God. I say, this is the cause that the advocateship of Christ is so little considered in the churches; yea, many that have been relieved by that office of his, have not understood what he has thereby done for them.

But perhaps this is to be kept from many till they come to behold his face, and till all things shall be revealed, that Christ might have glory given him in the next world for doing of that for them which they so little thought of in this. But do not thou be content with this ignorance, because the knowledge of his advocating it for thee will yield thee present relief. Study, therefore, thine own weakness, the holiness of the judge, the badness of thy cause, the subtlety, malice, and rage, of thine enemy; and be assured that whenever thou sinnest, by and by thou art for it accused before God at his judgment-seat. These things will, as it were, by way of necessity, instill into thy heart the need that thou hast of an advocate, and will make thee look as to the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ to justify thee, so to Christ as an Advocate to plead thy cause, as did holy Job in his distresses (Job 16:21).

Use *Third*. Is Christ Jesus not only a priest of, and a King over, but an Advocate for his people? Let this make us stand and wonder, and be amazed at his humiliation and condescension. We read of his humiliation on earth when he put himself into our flesh, took upon him our sins, and made them as his own unto condemnation and death. And to be an advocate is an office reproachful to the malicious, if any man be such an one, for those that are base and unworthy. Yea, and the higher and more honourable the person is that pleads for such, the more he humbles himself. The word doth often in effect account him now in heaven as a servant for us, and acts of service are acts of condescension; and I am sure some acts of service have more of that in them than some; and I think when all things are considered, that Christ neither doth nor can do anything for us there, of a more condescending nature, than to become our Advocate. True, he glories in it; but that doth not show that the work is excellent in itself. It is also one of his titles of honour; but that is to show how highly God esteems of, and dignifies all his acts; and though this shall tend at last to the greatening of his honour and glory in his kingdom, yet the work itself

is amazingly mean.

I speak after the manner of men. It is accounted so in this world. How ignoble and disrespectful doth a man make himself, especially to his enemy, when he undertakes to plead a bad cause, if it happeneth to be the cause of the base and unworthy! And I am sure we are, every one, so in ourselves, for whom he is become an Advocate with the Father. True, we are made worthy in him, but that is no thanks to us; as to ourselves and our cause, both are bad enough. And let us now leave off disputing, and stand amazed at his condescension; “Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven” (Psalm 113:6). And men of old did use to wonder to think that God should so much stoop, as to open his eyes to look upon man, or once so much as to mind him (Job 7:17; 14:1-3; Psalm 8:4; 144:3-4). And if these be acts that speak a condescension, what will you count of Christ’s standing up as an Advocate to plead the cause of his people? Must not that be much more so accounted? O, the condescension of Christ in heaven! While cavaliers quarrel at such kind of language, let the saints stay themselves and wonder at it, and be so much the more affected with his grace. The persons are base, the crimes are base, with which the persons are charged; wherefore one would think that has but the reason to think, that it is a great condescension of Christ, now in heaven, to take upon him to be an Advocate for such a people, especially if you consider the openness of this work of Christ; for this thing is not done in a corner. This is done in open court.

1. With a holy and just God; for he is the judge of all, and his eyes are purer than to behold iniquity; yea, his very essence and presence is a consuming fire; yet, before and with this God, and that for such a people, Jesus Christ, the King, will be an Advocate. For one mean man to be an Advocate for the base, with one that is not considerable, is not so much; but for Christ to be an Advocate for the base, and for the base, too, under the basest consideration, this is to be wondered at. When Bathsheba, the queen became an advocate for Adonijah unto king Solomon, you see how he flounced at her, for that his cause was bad. “And why,” saith he, “dost thou ask Abishag for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also” (1 Kings 2:16-23). I told you before, that to be an advocate did run one upon hazards of reproach; and it may easily be thought that the queen did blush, when, from the king, her son, she received such a repulse; nor do we hear any more of her being an advocate; I believe she had enough of this. But oh! This Christ of God, who himself is greater than Solomon, he is become an Advocate, “an Advocate with the Father,” who is the eternally just, and holy, and righteous God; and that for a people, with respect to him, far worse than could be Adonijah in the eyes of his brother Solomon. Majesty and justice are dreadful in themselves, and much more so when approached by any, especially when the cause, as to matter of fact, is bad, that the man is guilty of who is concerned in the advocateship of his friend; and yet Jesus Christ is still an Advocate for us, “an Advocate with the Father.”

2. Consider, also, before whom Jesus Christ doth plead as an Advocate, and that is before, or in the presence and observation of, all the heavenly host; for whilst Christ pleadeth with God for his people, all the host of heaven stand by on the right hand and on the left (Matthew 10:32). And though as yet there may seem to be but little in this consideration, yet Christ would have us know, and account it an infinite kindness of his to us that he will confess, and not be ashamed of us before the angels of his Father (Mark 8:38). Angels are holy and glorious creatures, and, in some respect, may have a greater knowledge of the nature and baseness of sin than we while here are capable of; and so may be made to stand and wonder while the Advocate pleads with God for



a people, from head to foot, clothed therewith. But Christ will not be ashamed to stand up for us before them, though they know how bad we are, and what vile things we have done. Let this, therefore, make us wonder.

3. Add to these, how unconcerned oftentimes those are with themselves, and their own desolate condition, for whom Christ, as an Advocate, laboureth in heaven with God. Alas! The soul is as far off of knowing what the devil is doing against it at God's bar as David was when Saul was threatening to have his blood, while he was hid in the field (1 Samuel 20:26-34). But, O true Jonathan! How didst thou plead for David! Only here thou hadst the advantage of our Advocate, thou hadst a good cause to plead; for when Saul, thy father, said, "David shall surely die," thy reply was, "Wherefore shall he be slain? What [evil] hath he done?" But Christ cannot say thus when he pleadeth for us at God's bar; nor is our present senselessness and unconcernedness about his pleading but an aggravation to our sin. Perhaps David was praying while Jonathan was playing the advocate for him before the king his father; but perhaps the saint is sleeping, yea, sinning more, whilst Christ is pleading for him in heaven. Oh! This should greatly affect us; this should make us wonder; this should be so considered by us, as to heighten our souls to admiration of the grace and kindness of Christ.

4. Join to these the greatness and gravity, the highness and glorious majesty of the Man that is become our Advocate. Says the text, it is Jesus Christ—"We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." Now, that he should become an Advocate, that he should embrace such an employ as this of his advocateship, let this be a wonderment, and so be accounted. But let us come to the fourth use.

Use *Fourth*. Is it so? Is Jesus Christ the Saviour also become our Advocate? Then let us labour to make that improvement of this doctrine as tendeth to strengthen our graces, and us, in the management of them. Indeed, this should be the use that we should make of all the offices of Christ; but let us, at this time, concern ourselves about this; let, I say, the poor Christian thus expostulate with himself—

1. Is Christ Jesus the Lord mine Advocate with the Father? Then awake, my faith, and shake thyself like a giant; stir up thyself, and be not faint; Christ is the Advocate of his people, and pleadeth the cause of the poor and needy. And as for sin, which is one great stumble to thy actings, O my faith, Christ has not only died for that as a sacrifice, nor only carried his sacrifice unto the Father, in the holiest of all, but is there to manage that offering as an Advocate, pleading the efficacy and worth thereof before God, against the devil, for us. Thus, I say, we should strengthen our faith; for faith has to do not only with the Word, but also with the offices of Christ. Besides, considering how many the assaults are that are made upon our faith, we find all little enough to support it against all the wiles of the devil.

Christians too little concern themselves, as I have said, with the offices of Jesus Christ; and therefore their knowledge of him is so little, and their faith in him so weak. We are bid to have our conversation in heaven, and then a man so hath, when he is there, in his spirit, by faith, observing how the Lord Jesus doth exercise his offices there for him. Let us often, by faith, go to the bar of God, there to hear our Advocate plead our cause; we should often have our faith to God's judgment-seat, because we are concerned there; there we are accused of the devil, there

we have our crimes laid open, and there we have our Advocate to plead; and this is suggested in the text, for it saith, “We have an Advocate with the Father”; therefore, thither our faith should go for help and relief in the day of our straits. I say, we should have our faith to God’s judgment-seat, and show it there, by the glass of our text, what Satan is doing against, and the Lord Jesus for, our souls. We should also show it how the Lord Jesus carries away every cause from the devil, and from before the judgment-seat, to the comfort of the children, the joy of angels, and the shame of the enemy. This would strengthen and support our faith indeed, and would make us more able than, for the most part, we are to apply the grace of God to ourselves, and hereafter to give more strong repulses to Satan. It is easy with a man, when he knows that his advocate has overthrown his enemy at the King’s Bench bar or Court of Common Pleas, less to fear him the next time he sees him, and more boldly to answer him when he reneweth his threats on him. Let faith, then, be strengthened, from its being exercised about the advocateship of Jesus Christ.

2. As we should make use of Christ’s advocateship for the strengthening of our faith, so we should also make use thereof to the encouraging us to prayer. As our faith is, so is our prayer; to wit, cold, weak, and doubtful, if our faith be so. When faith cannot apprehend that we have access to the Father by Christ, or that we have an Advocate, when charged before God for our sins by the devil, then we flag and faint in our prayer; but when we begin to take courage to believe—and then we do so when most clearly we apprehend Christ—then we get up in prayer. And according as a man apprehends Christ in his undertakings and offices, so he will wrestle with and supplicate God. As, suppose a man believes that Christ died for his sins; why, then, he will plead that in prayer with God. Suppose, also, that a man understands that Christ rose again for his justification; why, then, he will also plead that in prayer; but if he knows no more, no further will he go. But when he shall know that there is also for him an Advocate with the Father, and that that Advocate is Jesus Christ; and when the glory of this office of Christ shall shine in the face of this man’s soul; oh, then, he takes courage to pray with that courage he had not before; yea, then is his faith so supported and made strong, that his prayer is more fervent, and importuning abundance. So that, I say, the knowledge of the advocateship of Christ is very useful to strengthen our graces; and, as of graces in general, so of faith and prayer in particular. Wherefore, our wisdom is, so to improve this doctrine that prayer may be strengthened thereby.

3. As we should make use of this doctrine to strengthen faith and prayer, so we should make use of it to keep us humble; for the more offices Christ executeth for us with the Father, the greater sign that we are bad; and the more we see our badness, the more humble should we be. Christ gave for us the price of blood; but that is not all; Christ as a Captain has conquered death and the grave for us, but that is not all: Christ as a Priest intercedes for us in heaven; but that is not all. Sin is still in us, and with us, and mixes itself with whatever we do, whether what we do be religious or civil; for not only our prayers and our sermons, our hearings and preaching, and so; but our houses, our shops, our trades, and our beds, are all polluted with sin. Nor doth the devil, our night and day adversary, forbear to tell our bad deeds to our Father, urging that we might for ever be disinherited for this. But what should we now do, if we had not an Advocate; yea, if we had not one who would plead in *forma pauperis*,<sup>1</sup> yea, if we had not one that could prevail, and that would faithfully execute that office for us? Why, we must die. But since we are rescued by

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

him, let us, as to ourselves, lay our hand upon our mouth, and be silent, and say, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.” And, I say again, since the Lord Jesus is fain to run through so many offices for us before he can bring us to glory, oh! how low, how little, how vile and base in our own eyes should we be.

It is a shame for a Christian to think highly of himself, since Christ is fain to do so much for him, and he again not at all able to make him amends; but some, whose riches consist in nothing but scabs and lice, will yet have lofty looks. But are not they much to blame who sit lifting up of lofty eyes in the house, and yet know not how to turn their hand to do anything so, but that another, their betters, must come and mend their work? I say, is it not more meet that those that are such, should look and speak, and act as such that declare their sense of their unhandiness, and their shame, and the like, for their unprofitableness? Yea, is it not meet that to every one they should confess what sorry ones they are? I am sure it should be thus with Christians, and God is angry when it is otherwise. Nor doth it become these helpless ones to lift up themselves on high. Let Christ’s advocateship therefore teach us to be humble.

4. As we should improve this doctrine to strengthen faith, to encourage prayer, and keep us humble, so we should make use of it to encourage perseverance—that is, to hold on, to hold out to the end; for, for all those causes the apostle setteth Christ before us as an Advocate. There is nothing more discourages the truly godly than the sense of their own infirmities, as has been hinted all along; consequently, nothing can more encourage them to go on than to think that Christ is an Advocate for them. The services, also, that Christ has for us to do in this world are full of difficulty, and so apt to discourage: but when a Christian shall come to understand that—if we do what we can—it is not a failing either in matter or manner that shall render it wholly unserviceable, or give the devil that advantage as to plead thereby to prevail for our condemnation and rejection; but that Christ, by being our Advocate, saves us from falling short, as also from the rage of hell. This will encourage us to hold on, though we do but hobble in all our goings, and fumble in all our doings; for we have Christ for an Advocate in case we sin in the management of any duty—“If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Let us, therefore, go on in all God’s ways as well as we can for our hearts; and when our foot slips, let us tell God of it, and his mercy in Christ shall hold us up (Psalm 84:9-12).

Darkness, and to be shut up in prison, is also a great discouragement to us; but our Advocate is for giving us light, and for fetching us out of our prison. True, he that Joseph chose to be his Advocate with Pharaoh remembered not Joseph, but forgot him (Genesis 40:14-23); but he that has Jesus Christ to be his Advocate shall be remembered before God, (Micah 7:8-10). —“He remembered us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 136:23). Yea, he will say to the prisoners, Show yourselves; and to them that are in the prison-house, Go forth. Satan sometimes gets the saints into the prison when he has taken them captive by their lusts (Romans 7:23). But they shall not be always there; and this should encourage us to go on in godly ways; for “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

Objection. But I cannot pray, says one, therefore how should I persevere? When I go to prayer, instead of praying, my mouth is stopped. What would you have me do?

Answer. Well, soul, though Satan may baffle thee, he cannot so serve thine Advocate; if thou must not speak for thyself, Christ thine Advocate can speak for thee. Lemuel was to open his mouth for the dumb—to wit, for the sons of destruction, and to plead the cause of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9). If we knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as the Word reveals it, we would believe, we would hope, and would, notwithstanding all discouragements, wait for the salvation of the Lord. But there are many things that hinder, wherefore faith, prayer, and perseverance, are made difficult things unto us—“But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”: and, God “shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace,” was once a good word to me when I could not pray.

5. As we should improve this doctrine for the improvement and encouragement of these graces, so we should improve it to the driving of difficulties down before us, to the getting of ground upon the enemy. “Resist the devil,” drive him back; this is it for which thy Lord Jesus is an Advocate with God in heaven; and this is it for the sake of which thou art made a believer on earth (1 Peter 5:9; Hebrews 12:4). Wherefore has God put this sword, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE, into thy hand, but to fight thy way through the world? “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,” and say, “I will go in the strength of the Lord God.” And since I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, I will not despair, though “the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about” (Psalm 49:5).

Use *Fifth*. Doth Jesus Christ stand up to plead for us with God, to plead with him for us against the devil? Let this teach us to stand up to plead for him before men, to plead for him against the enemies of his person and gospel. This is but reasonable; for if Christ stands up to plead for us, why should not we stand up to plead for him? He also expects this at our hands, saying, “Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” (Psalm 94:16). The apostle did it, and counted himself engaged to do it, where he saith, he preached “the gospel of God with much contention” (1 Thessalonians 2:2). Nor is this the duty of apostles or preachers only, but every child of God should “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3).

And, as I said, there is reason why we should do this; he standeth for us. And if we,

(1.) Consider the disparity of persons to plead, it will seem far more reasonable. He stands up to plead with God, we stand up to plead with men. The dread of God is great, yea, greater than the dread of men.

(2.) If we consider the persons pleaded for. He pleads for sinners, for the inconsiderable, vile, and base; we plead for Jesus, for the great, holy, and honourable. It is an honour for the poor to stand up for the great and mighty; but what honour is it for the great to plead for the base? Reason, therefore, requireth that we stand up to plead for him, though there can be but little rendered why he should stand up to plead for us.

(3.) He standeth up to plead for us in the most holy place, though we are vile; and why should we not stand up for him in this vile world, since he is holy?

(4.) He pleads for us, though our cause is bad; why should not we plead for him, since his cause

is good?

(5.) He pleads for us, against fallen angels; why should we not plead for him against sinful vanities?

(6.) He pleads for us to save our souls; why should not we plead for him to sanctify his name?

(7.) He pleads for us before the holy angels; why should not we plead for him before princes?

(8.) He is not ashamed of us, though now in heaven; why should we be ashamed of him before this adulterous and sinful generation?

(9.) He is unwearied in his pleading for us; why should we faint and be dismayed while we plead for him?

My brethren, is it not reasonable that we should stand up for him in this world? Yea, is it not reason that in all things we should study his exaltation here, since he in all things contrives our honour and glory in heaven? A child of God should study in every of his relations to serve the Lord Christ in this world, because Christ, by the execution of every one of his offices, seeks our promotion hereafter. If these be not sufficient arguments to bow us to yield up our members, ourselves, our whole selves to God, that we may be servants of righteousness unto him; yea, if by these and such like we are not made willing to stand up for him before men, it is a sign that there is but little, if any, of the grace of God in our hearts.

Yea, further, that we should have now at last in reserve Christ as authorized to be our Advocate to plead for us; for this is the last of his offices for us while we are here, and is to be put in practice for us when there are more than ordinary occasions. This is to help, as we say, at a dead lift, even then when a Christian is taken for a captive, or when he sinks in the mire where is no standing, or when he is clothed with filthy garments, or when the devil doth desperately plead against us our evil deeds, or when by our lives we have made our salvation questionable, and have forfeited our evidences for heaven. And why then should not we have also in reserve for Christ? And when profession and confession will not do, when loss of goods and a prison will not do, when loss of country and of friends will not do, then to bring it in, then to bring it in as the reserve, and as that which will do-to wit, willingly to lay down our lives for his name; and since he doth his part without grudging for us, let us do ours with rejoicing for him (Isaiah 24:15; John 21:19).

Use *Sixth*. Doth Jesus Christ stand up to plead for us, and that of his mere grace and love? Then this should teach Christians to be watchful and wary how they sin against God. This inference seems to run retrograde; but whoso duly considers it, will find it fairly fetched from the premises. Christianity teaches ingenuity, and aptness to be sensible of kindnesses, and doth instruct us to a loathness to be overhard upon him from whom we have all at free cost. "Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. Shall we do evil that good may come? God forbid. Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:1, 2, 15).

It is the most disingenuous thing in the world not to care how chargeable we are to that friend

that bestows all upon us gratis.<sup>2</sup> When Mephibosheth had an opportunity to be yet more chargeable to David, he would not, because he had his life and his all from the mere grace of the king (2 Samuel 19:24-28). Also David thought it too much for all his household to go to Absalom's feast, because it was made of free cost. Why, Christ is our Advocate of free cost, we pay him neither fee nor income for what he doth; nor doth he desire aught of us, but to accept of his free doing for us thankfully; wherefore let us put him upon this work as little as may be, and by so doing we shall show ourselves Christians of the right make and stamp. We count him but a fellow of a very gross spirit that will therefore be lavishing of what is his friend's, because it is prepared of mere kindness for him; Esau himself was loath to do this; and shall Christians be disingenuous?

I dare say, if Christians were sober, watchful, and of a more self-denying temper, they need not put the Lord Jesus to that to which for the want of these things they do so often put him. I know he is not unwilling to serve us, but I know also that the love of Christ should constrain us to live not to ourselves, but to him that loved us, that died for us, and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). We shall do that which is naught too much, even then when we watch and take care what we can to prevent it. Our flesh, when we do our utmost diligence to resist, it will defile both us and our best performances. We need not lay the reins on its neck and say, What care we? the more sin the more grace, and the more we shall see the kindness of Christ, and what virtue there is in his Advocate's office to save us. And should there be any such here, I would present them with a scripture or two; the first is this, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?" (Deuteronomy 32:6). And if this gentle check will not do, then read the other, Shall we say, Let us do evil that good may come? their damnation is just (Romans 3:8). Besides, as nothing so swayeth with us as love, so there is nothing so well pleasing to God as it. Let a man love, though he has opportunity to do nothing, it is accepted of the God of heaven. But where there is no love, let a man do what he will, it is not at all regarded (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Now to be careless and negligent, and that from a supposed understanding of the grace of Christ in the exercise of his advocateship for us in heaven, is as clear sign as can be, that in thy heart there is no love to Christ, and that consequently thou art just a nothing, instead of being a Christian. Talk, then, what thou wilt, and profess never so largely, Christ is no Advocate of thine, nor shalt thou, thou so continuing, be ever the better for any of those pleas that Christ, at God's bar, puts in against the devil, for his people.

Christians, Christ Jesus is not unwilling to lay out himself for you in heaven, nor to be an Advocate for you in the presence of his Father; but yet he is unwilling that you should render him evil for good; I say, that you should do so by your remissness and carelessness for want of such a thinking of things as may affect your hearts therewith. It would be more comely in you, would please him better, would agree with your profession, and also better would prove you gracious, to be found in the power and nature of these conclusions. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication,

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<sup>2</sup> *Gratis*, a Latin word meaning "free, freely" or "without payment"; as a legal term, it not only applies to the attorney's freely surrendering his regular fee, but also his willingness to freely render those services without payment.

uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Colossians 3:1-6).

I say, it would be more comely for Christians to say, We will not sin because God will pardon; we will not commit iniquity because Christ will advocate for us. "I write unto you that ye sin not; though if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." Why, the brute would conclude, I will not do so, because my master will beat me; I will do thus, for then my master will love me. And Christians should be above [such] men, brutish men.

And for a conclusion as to this, let me present you with three considerations.

(1.) Know that it is the nature of grace to draw holy arguments to move to goodness of life from the love and goodness of God, but not thence to be remiss (2 Corinthians 5:14).

(2.) Know therefore that they have no grace that find not these effects of the discoveries of the love and goodness of God.

(3.) Know also that among all the swarms of professors that from age to age make mention of the name of Christ, they only must dwell with him in heaven that do part from iniquity, and are zealous of good works (2 Timothy 2:19). He gave himself for these (Titus 2:11-14). Not that they were so antecedent to this gift. But those that he hath redeemed to himself are thus sanctified by the faith of him (Acts 26:18).

Use *Seventh*. Is it so? Is Jesus Christ an Advocate with the Father for us? Then this should encourage strong Christians to tell the weak ones where, when they are in their temptations and fears through sin, they may have one to plead their cause. Thus the apostle doth by the text; and thus we should do one to another. Mark, he telleth the weak of an Advocate: "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not; though if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father."

Christians, when they would comfort their dejected brethren, talk too much at rovers<sup>3</sup> or in generals; they should be more at the mark: "A word spoken in season, how good is it?" I say, Christians should observe and inquire, that they may observe the cause or ground of their brother's trouble; and having first taken notice of that, in the next place consider under which of the offices of Jesus Christ this sin or trouble has cast this man; and so labour to apply Christ in the word of the gospel to him. Sometimes we are bid to consider him as an Apostle and High Priest, and sometimes as a forerunner and an Advocate. And he has, as was said afore, these divers offices, with others, that we by the consideration of him might be relieved under our manifold temptations. This, as I said, as I perceive John teaches us here, as he doth a little before of his being a sacrifice for us; for he presenteth them that after conversion shall sin with Christ as an Advocate with the Father. As who should say, My brethren, are you tempted, are you accused, have you sinned, has Satan prevailed against you? "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Thus we should do, and deliver our brother from death. There is nothing that Satan more desires

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<sup>3</sup> AT ROVERS, is an English expression not particularly used in the United States of America. It means "random" or "aimless."

than to get good men in his sieve to sift them as wheat, that if possible he may leave them nothing but bran; no grace, but the very husk and shell of religion. And when a Christian comes to know this, should Christ as Advocate be hid, what could bear him up? But let him now remember and believe that “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” and he forthwith conceiveth comfort; for an advocate is to plead for me according as has been showed afore, that I may be delivered from the wrath and accusation of my adversary, and still be kept safe under grace.

Further, by telling of my brother that he hath an Advocate, I put things into his mind that he has not known, or do bring them into remembrance which he has forgotten—to wit, that though he hath sinned, he shall be saved in a way of justice; for an advocate is to plead justice and law, and Christ is to plead these for a saint that has sinned; yea, so to plead them that he may be saved. This being so, he is made to perceive that by law he must have his sins forgiven him; that by justice he must be justified. For Christ as an Advocate pleadeth for justice, justice to himself; and this saint is of himself—a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Nor has Satan so good a right to plead justice against us, though we have sinned, that we might be damned, as Christ has to plead it, though we have sinned, that we might be saved; for sin cannot cry so loud to justice as can the blood of Christ; and he pleads his blood as Advocate, by which he has answered the law; wherefore the law having nothing to object, must needs acquit the man for whom the Lord Jesus pleads. I conclude this with that of the Psalmist, “Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps” (Psalm 85:9-13).

Use *Eighth*. But what is all this to you that are not concerned in this privilege? The children, indeed, have the advantage of an advocate; but what is this to them that have none to plead their cause? (Jeremiah 30:12-13); they are, as we say, left to the wide world, or to be ground to powder between the justice of God and the sins which they have committed. This is the man that none but the devil seeks after; that is pursued by the law, and sin, and death, and has none to plead his cause. It is sad to consider the plight that such an one is in. His accuser is appointed, yea, ordered to bring in a charge against him—“Let Satan stand at his right hand,” in the place where accusers stand. “And when he shall be judged, let him be condemned,” let there be none to plead for his deliverance. If he cries, or offereth to cry out for mercy or forgiveness, “let his prayer become sin” (Psalm 109:6-7). This is the portion of a wicked man: “terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night, the east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and as a storm hurleth him out of his place; for God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place” (Job 27:20-23). And what shall this man do? Can he overstand the charge, the accusation, the sentence, and condemnation? No, he has none to plead his cause. I remember that somewhere I have read, as I think, concerning one who, when he was being carried upon men's shoulders to the grave, cried out as he lay upon the bier, I am accused before the just judgment of God; and a while after, I am condemned before the just judgment of God. Nor was this man but strict as the religion that was then on foot in the world; but all the religion of the



world amounts to no more than nothing. I mean as to eternal salvation, if men be denied an Advocate to plead their cause with God. Nor can any advocate save Jesus Christ the righteous avail anything at all, because there is none appointed but him to that work, and therefore not to be admitted to enter a plea for their client at the bar of God.

Objection. But some may say, There is God's grace, the promise, Christ's blood, and his second part of priesthood now in heaven. Can none of these severally, nor all of them jointly, save a man from hell, unless Christ also become our Advocate?

Answer. All these, his Advocate's office not excluded, are few enough, and little enough, to save the saints from hell; for the righteous shall scarcely be saved (1 Peter 4:18). There must, then, be the promise, God's grace, Christ's blood, and him to advocate too, or we cannot be saved. What is the promise without God's grace, and what is that grace without a promise to bestow it on us? I say, what benefit have we thereby? Besides, if the promise and God's grace, without Christ's blood, would have saved us, wherefore then did Christ die? Yea, and again I say, if all these, without his being an Advocate, would have delivered us from all those disadvantages that our sins and infirmities would bring us to and into; surely in vain and to no purpose was Jesus made an Advocate. But, soul, there is need of all; and therefore be not thou offended that the Lord Jesus is of the Father made so much to his, but rather admire and wonder that the Father and the Son should be so concerned with so sorry a lump of dust and ashes as thou art. And I say again, be confounded to think that sin should be a thing so horrible, of power to pollute, to captivate, and detain us from God, that without all this ado (I would speak with reverence of God and his wisdom) we cannot be delivered from the everlasting destruction that it hath brought upon the children of men.

But, I say, what is this to them that are not admitted to a privilege in the advocate-office of Christ? Whether he is an Advocate or no, the case to them is the same. True, Christ as a Saviour is not divided; he that hath him not in all, shall have him in none at all of his offices in a saving manner. Therefore, he for whom he is not an Advocate, he is nothing as to eternal life.

Indeed, Christ by some of his offices is concerned for the elect, before by some others of them he is; but such shall have the blessing of them all before they come to glory. Nor hath man ground to say Christ is here or there mine, before he hath ground to say, he also is mine Advocate; though that office of his, as has been already showed, stands in the last place, and comes in as a reserve. But can any imagine that Christ will pray for them as Priest for whom he will not plead as Advocate? or that he will speak for them to God for whom he will not plead against the devil? No, no; they are his own, that he loveth to the end (John 13:1), to the end of their lives, to the end of their sins, to the end of their temptations, to the end of their fears, and of the exercise of the rage and malice of Satan against them. To the end may also be understood, even until he hath given them the profit and benefit of all his offices in their due exercise and administration. But, I say, what is all this to them that have him not for their Advocate?

You may remember that I have already told you that there are several who have not the Lord Jesus for their Advocate—to wit, those that are still in their sins, pursuing of their lusts; those that are ashamed of him before men; and those that are never otherwise but lukewarm in their profession. And let us now, for a conclusion, make further inquiry into this matter.

Is it likely that those should have the Lord Jesus for their Advocate to plead their cause; who despise and reject his person, his Word, and ways? or those either who are so far off from sense of, and shame for, sin, that it is the only thing they hug and embrace? True, he pleadeth the cause of his people both with the Father and against the devil, and all the world besides; but open profaneness, shame of good, and without heart or warmth in religion, are no characters of his people. It is irrational to think that Christ is an Advocate for, or that he pleadeth the cause of such, who, in the self-same hour, and before his enemies, are throwing dirt in his face by their profane mouths and unsanctified lives and conversations.

If he pleads as an Advocate for any, he must plead against Satan for them, and so consequently must have some special bottom to ground his plea upon; I say, a bottom better than that upon which the carnal man stands; which bottom is either some special relation that this man stands in to God, or some special law he hath privilege by, that he may have some ground for an appeal, if need be, to the justice and righteousness of God; but none of these things belong to them that are dead in trespasses and sins; they stand in no special relation to God: they are not privileged by the law of grace.

Objection. —But doth not Christ as Advocate plead for his elect, though not called as yet?

Answer. —He died for all his elect, he prayeth for all his elect as a Priest, but as an Advocate he pleadeth only for the children, the called only. Satan objecteth not against God's election, for he knows it not; but he objecteth against the called— to wit, whether they be truly godly or no, or whether they ought not to die for their transgressions (Job 1:9-10; Zechariah 3:1-10). And for these things he has some colour to frame an accusation against us, and now it is time enough for Christ to stand up to plead. I say, for these things he has some colour to frame a plea against us; for there is sin and a law of works, and a judge too, that has not respect of persons. Now to overthrow this plea of Satan, is Jesus Christ our Advocate; yea, to overthrow it by pleading law and justice; and this must be done with respect to the children only— “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”